ANNUAL REPORT

ON

LABOUR IMMIGRATION INTO ASSAM

FOR THE

Year 1888.

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REPORT ON LABOUR IMMIGRATION INTO ASSAM FOR THE YEAR 1888.

CHAPTER I.—IMMIGRATION.

1. Before proceeding to deal with the statistics of the year, the Chief Commissioner desires to make one or two remarks by way of explanation.

In the first place, he thinks it well to explain that the present report is issued under somewhat exceptional circumstances. It is to be followed in a few months by a much fuller report, based on an elaborate enquiry, and covering the whole period since the commencement of the Act, which has been undertaken under the orders of the Secretary of State and the Governor-General in Council, and which is intended to form the basis of legislation. That being so, Mr. Fitzpatrick has been content to pass over many points more lightly than he otherwise would have done, and has further, on some doubtful questions, on which in an ordinary year he would express a provisional or tentative opinion, thought it best to reserve his opinion altogether.

The Chief Commissioner would further draw attention to the following explanatory remarks, with a view to avoid any possible misunderstanding of the statistics given in this report. As was stated in the Provincial Report* for the year 1883, there are two sources of information from which statistics regarding immigration into Assam are obtained, and neither of these is absolutely correct. The Deputy-Commissioner of Goálpára registers all immigrants who come *viâ* Dhubri into the Assam Valley, whether under contract or free, except such as are imported *viâ* Goalundo, and merely pass by Dhubri *en route* to their destination: but for those who enter the Surma Valley from Goalundo, the Embarkation Agent at that place has hitherto only recorded contractors' coolies, that is, coolies recruited by contractors licensed under Act I. of 1882, not those imported by garden-sardárs or free immigrants. The other source of information consists of the half-yearly returns submitted by garden managers, which purport to show the number of labourers imported during the period covered by the returns, whether free or by garden-sardárs or by contractors. Unfortunately, the statistics last mentioned are defective in various ways, and can only be accepted as approximately correct. Again, it is almost certain that very many of the immigrants who are brought to Dhubri by uncertificated garden-sardárs, and are placed under contract there, are subsequently, on arrival at the gardens, classified in the managers' returns as "Act sardári labourers" a classification which is, strictly speaking, incorrect, because such labourers, not having been recruited by sardárs certificated under Act I. of 1882, cannot be correctly called "Act sardári labourers." It should be added that all the figures given in this report, with the exception of those which relate to Dhubri, and are supplied by the Deputy-Commissioner of Goálpára, and those which relate to offences, verification of contracts, inspection, and some minor matters, are taken from the garden returns, a general abstract of which is contained in the statement appended to the report. The Chief Commissioner hopes that the result of enquiries which are in progress will be to lead to greater accuracy in the statistics supplied by employers of labour.

* Chapter III., paragraph 1.

2. The following table compares the importations of all classes of labourers for the past two years :—

Provincial figures.

		1887.	1888.	Increase or decrease.	Percentage of increase or decrease.
Act ...	Sardári adults ...	10,237	12,436	+2,199	+21·4
	Contractors' adults ...	11,402	10,165	—1,237	—10·8
Non-Act...	Adults	7,451	10,716	+3,265	+43·8
	Total ...	29,090	33,317	+4,227	+12·6
Children		7,373	12,976	+5,603	+75·9
Grand Total, including children...		36,463	46,293	9,830	+26·9

There was thus a very considerable expansion of immigration under the head of (1) adult labourers imported through the agency of garden-sardárs, (2) adult labourers imported otherwise than under the provisions of the Act, and (3) children, under which head are included also the children of Act labourers, who, being under sixteen years of age, cannot enter into a labour contract. On the other hand, there was a substantial falling off under the head of "contractors' adults" imported under the Act, which, as was explained in last year's report, includes many free immigrants in the legal sense,

that is, immigrants supplied by unlicensed contractors who are technically free immigrants until they reach Dhubri, where they are placed on contract under Section 111, and are thus brought under the Act.

In connection with the increase in the labour supply imported during 1888, as compared with the previous year, the figures show that, although the general percentage of increase advanced from 18 per cent. in the previous year (*see* paragraph 14 of the report for 1887) to 26·9 per cent. in the year under report, this result was, taking the Province as a whole, entirely due to the increased importation of children. If the figures for children are excluded, the general percentage of increase over the statistics of 1887 is reduced to 12·6, against 28·0, which represented the increase in 1887 as compared with 1886. There was therefore no abnormal increase in the adult labour supply imported during the year 1888, as compared with the previous year. The only causes which can be assigned for the increase which actually took place are the ordinary development of the tea industry, and possibly also the tendency of planters to adopt a higher class of cultivation.

As regards the increased importation of children, it is possible that in those districts in which there has been a substantial increase in the importations through the agency of garden-sardárs, this result represents the natural effect of an extension of the sardári system of recruitment, because coolies brought up by sardárs are more often accompanied by their families than those recruited by contractors. In the case of one district (Nowgong), it is said that strenuous efforts were made by managers to import such coolies as would bring their families, in order to lessen the chance of desertion. It is, of course, possible that this result may be due to causes, such as the existence of scarcity, which are to be sought for in the recruiting districts; but, however this may be, the fact cannot be regarded as otherwise than satisfactory from the point of view of this Province, so far as it indicates a desire or intention on the part of the imported labourers to settle permanently in the Province. The Deputy-Commissioner, Darrang, reports that many imported labourers send for their families after they have tested the work and life on the estate on which they are employed, and this is doubtless the case in other districts also.

The expansion shown by the statistics in the operations of garden-sardárs and the reduction in those of licensed contractors are by no means novel features, and may be ascribed (1) to the cost of labourers recruited and imported by sardárs being less (in some cases considerably less) than that of labourers recruited and imported by contractors (*see* paragraph 7, where comparative figures are given and this point is further discussed), and (2) to the fact that labourers procured through the agency of sardárs have been found by experience to be superior in physique and in other respects preferable to those procured from contractors. As to this point, the Deputy-Commissioner of Darrang observes that "the tendency is doubtless to recruit more and more through the less expensive agency of sardárs, and to fall back as little as possible on contractors' coolies."

As regards the figures under "non-Act adults," a word of caution is necessary against assuming that none of the adults thus shown are working under contract. This is not the case, inasmuch as many of the labourers entered in this category are working under contracts executed, after arrival at the gardens, under the provisions of Act I. of 1882 or Act XIII. of 1859. It is unfortunately not possible to say what proportion of these labourers are working as free labourers, properly so called, and what proportion are working under contract.

3. The following figures give the statistics of Act and non-Act importations for the two valleys and for each district separately :—

District and valley statistics.

District	Act adults.			Non-Act adults			Total of Act and non-Act adults.			Children.			Grand total, including children.		
	1887.	1888.	Percentage of increase or decrease	1887	1888.	Percentage of increase or decrease.	1887.	1888.	Percentage of increase or decrease.	1887	1888.	Percentage of increase or decrease.	1887.	1888.	Percentage of increase or decrease.
Cachar	2,134	2,515	+17·88	1,578	2,331	+50·95	3,712	4,846	+31·69	810	963	+18·88	4,522	5,809	+29·56
Sylhet.....	927	984	+6·14	3,567	5,568	+56·65	4,494	6,572	+46·23	1,420	3,023	+112·68	5,914	9,595	+62·24
Total Surma Valley	3,061	3,499	+14·30	5,145	7,969	+54·88	8,206	11,468	+39·75	2,230	3,986	+78·74	10,436	15,454	+48·08
Kamrúp	110	154	+40·0	17	16	−5·88	127	170	+33·85	54	107	+98·14	181	277	+53·03
Darrang	3,920	4,129	+5·33	230	469	+103·91	4,150	4,598	+10·79	1,181	1,698	+43·78	5,331	6,296	+18·41
Nowgong	558	994	+79·74	764	488	−36·12	1,317	1,482	+12·52	114	475	+316·66	1,431	1,957	+36·78
Sibsagar	6,793	6,812	+0·27	285	568	+99·29	7,078	7,380	+4·26	1,662	3,504	+124·18	8,641	10,884	+25·95
Lakhimpur	7,209	7,013	−2·62	1,010	1,206	+19·40	8,219	8,219	+0·00	2,231	3,296	+47·78	10,443	11,515	+10·26
Total Assam Valley	18,578	19,102	+2·82	2,306	2,747	+19·12	20,884	21,849	+4·62	5,142	8,980	+74·68	26,027	30,829	+18·46
Grand Total ..	21,639	22,601	+4·44	7,451	10,716	+43·81	29,090	33,317	+14·62	7,372	12,976	+75·99	36,463	46,293	+26·95

There was thus during the year under report an increase both under Act and non-Act importations in the case of the districts of the Surma Valley, which result is in direct contrast to the results of 1887, when there was a considerable decrease as compared with the importations of 1886. This result in Sylhet is the more noteworthy, as the general falling off shown in the previous year was attributed to the fact that the newly-reclaimed tracts had been fully supplied with labour. The detailed figures show that the increase in importations was common to all the sub-divisions of the Sylhet district. On this point the sub-divisional officer of South Sylhet writes :—

"Though there is no extensive opening out of new land which calls for an extraordinary increase of force, there is still a very perceptible demand for labour, and complaints of its scarcity. Managers have to compare the disadvantage of working short-handed with the enormous expense of bringing up new hands, an expense yearly increasing from the competition in the recruiting districts."

Commenting on the results generally, the Deputy-Commissioner of Sylhet observes :—

"Non-Act immigration is steadily on the increase, while Act immigration is on the decrease as steadily, the decrease being most constant and marked in the case of contractors' immigrants."

In the case of Cachar, the decline which took place last year was explained to be due to the cheapness and abundance of free labour. The Chief Commissioner is not aware of any reason for supposing that free labour was either less cheap or less abundant in Cachar during the year under report than in the previous year; but, however this may be, the importations increased considerably, and the figures for 1888 were in excess of those for either of the previous two years. The Deputy-Commissioner explains that the result was—

"Partly owing to the garden extensions, partly to replace labour which has drifted away to paddy cultivation and to Sylhet."

As regards both Cachar and Sylhet, a further explanation of the increase which occurred during the year under report may be that an unusually small importation during any year, as was the case in 1887, is not unnaturally followed by an abnormally large demand during the succeeding year.

In the Assam Valley the increase which took place in the importation of adult labourers, though common to every district, was not considerable in any one district (except Kámrúp, where, however, the labour force is small). Act importations increased in all districts except Lakhimpur, but the increase under this head in Sibságar was nominal only. Non-Act importations increased in Darrang, Sibságar, and Lakhimpur, while a decrease is shown under this head in Kámrúp and Nowgong. On the whole, if children are excluded, the general results showed no very material difference from those of the previous year, 21,849 adult labourers having been imported, against 20,884 in the previous year.

Comparing the figures of the two valleys it may be noticed that whereas the increase in Act importations in the Surma Valley represented a percentage of 14·30, in the Assam Valley it represented a percentage of 2·82 only, while, in the case of non-Act adults, the percentage of increase was 54·88 in the Surma Valley, against 19·12 in the Assam Valley. As a general result, therefore, it may be said that, whether as regards Act importations or non-Act importations, there was considerably greater activity in the Surma Valley than in the Assam Valley during the year under report as compared with the previous year. In both valleys there was a very considerable increase in the number of children imported, and it is curious that, whereas the percentage of increase in the importation of adult labourers should have varied, as between 39·75 per cent. in the Surma Valley, and only 4·62 per cent in the Assam Valley, the percentage of increase in the case of children imported shows no similar variation, the latter percentage having been 78·74 for the Surma Valley and 74·80 for the Assam Valley. The Chief Commissioner is unable to offer any explanation of this result.

As showing the extent to which immigrants who enter the Province as free immigrants, and who are included in the above statement under the head of "non-Act adults," are placed under contract after arrival at the gardens, it may be noted that the Deputy-Commissioner of Sylhet remarks that—

"The coolies who come as free immigrants are generally on arrival put under Act-I. or Act-XIII. contracts."

And the Deputy-Commissioner of Cachar writes—

"The sub-divisional officer of Hailákándi states that most of the non-Act adults are brought up by contractors, and are straightway put under Act-I. contracts on arrival in gardens. He further says that he has lately heard managers express intentions to place these coolies under Act XIII. in future. In the sadr this is not quite the case. Most non-Act adults seem to be brought up by sardárs deputed from the garden to recruit, and I find they are as freely placed under Act-XIII. contracts as under Act I., if not indeed more so."

It is presumed that the sardárs referred to by Mr. Kennedy are uncertificated sardárs, as, if certificated, they render themselves liable to punishment, and should be punished under clauses 2 and 3 of Section 151 of Act I. of 1882. The extent to which coolies are brought up without a contract by certificated garden-sardárs contrary to law is one of the matters which, in the circular* recently issued by the Chief Commissioner regarding the enquiries to be made into the general working of Act I. of 1882, have been indicated as calling for investigation.

* See paragraph 10 of Circular at page vi. of Appendix A attached to this report.

4. The comparative table below shows the adult immigrants according to their sex and country of origin, divided into classes as Act coolies (sardári and contractors') and non-Act coolies :—

Nationality of immigrants.

Nationality of immigrants.		Act.				Non-Act.		Total.	
		Garden sardárs.		Contractors.					
		1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.
1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Bengal	Men	656	801	984	765	371	719	2,011	2,285
	Women	562	636	968	770	360	717	1,890	2,123
	Total	1,218	1,437	1,952	1,535	731	1,436	3,901	4,408
North-Western Provinces, Oudh, and Behar.	Men	901	979	1,329	446	2,440	3,295	4,670	4,720
	Women	550	777	797	357	1,479	2,141	2,826	3,275
	Total	1,451	1,756	2,126	803	3,919	5,436	7,496	7,995
Chota Nagpur	Men	4,018	5,109	4,160	4,236	960	1,852	9,138	11,197
	Women	3,470	4,097	3,062	3,565	715	1,393	7,247	9,055
	Total	7,488	9,206	7,222	7,801	1,675	3,245	16,385	20,252
Nepal	Men	.....	.....	80	.....	14	7	94	7
	Women	.....	6	18	.....	4	9	22	15
	Total	.....	6	98	.....	18	16	116	22
Madras	Men	51	14	1	21	49	141	101	176
	Women	29	8	.....	5	30	96	59	109
	Total	80	22	1	26	79	237	160	285
Bombay	Men	.....	1	.....	.....	1	3	1	4
	Women	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	3	.....	3
	Total	.....	1	.....	.....	1	6	1	7
Assam	Men	.....	5	3	.....	1,004	308	1,007	313
	Women	.....	3	.....	.....	24	32	24	35
	Total	.....	8	3	.....	1,028	340	1,031	348
Total	Men	5,626	6,909	6,557	5,468	4,839	6,325	17,022	18,702
	Women	4,611	5,527	4,845	4,697	2,612	4,391	12,068	14,615
Grand Total		10,237	12,436	11,402	10,165	7,451	10,716	29,090	33,317

The above figures, which relate only to adult immigrants, show that the increase in importations was distributed over persons of all nationalities except those from Nepal and from Assam, and that, as in the previous year, coolies from Chota Nagpur constituted more than half of the importations of the year. As regards Act and non-Act importations respectively, the chief localities of recruitment stand in the following relative order in regard to the number of labourers imported during the year :—

(*a*) *Act importations.*

Locality of recruitment.	Recruited by: Garden sardárs.	Contractors.	Total number of labourers imported during 1888.
(1) Chota Nagpur	9,206	7,801	17,007
(2) Bengal	1,437	1,535	2,972
(3) North-Western Provinces, Oudh, and Behar	1,756	803	2,559

(b) *Non-Act importations.*

Locality of recruitment.	Number of labourers imported.
(1) North-Western Provinces, Oudh, and Behar	5,436
(2) Chota Nagpur	3,215
(3) Bengal	1,436

These figures show that, whereas Chota Nagpur stands first in regard to Act importations the chief recruiting ground for free labour is to be found in the North-Western Provinces, Oudh, and Behar. It will be seen that the operations of sardárs and licensed contractors are conducted on an immensely larger scale in Chota Nagpur than elsewhere, while the work carried on by licensed contractors in the North-Western Provinces, Oudh, and Behar is very limited, but in this connection the explanatory remarks given in paragraph 1 of this chapter must not be overlooked.

The district reports, as usual, bear abundant witness to the preference of employers for labourers from Chota Nagpur; but, although this is doubtless the case, the figures must be received with some caution, as there is reason to suppose that coolies from Bengal and the North-Western Provinces are in some cases entered as from Chota Nagpur in the contractors' lists, and consequently in the managers' returns. Under the head of non-Act importations from the North-Western Provinces, Oudh, and Behar it is worthy of note that no less than 4,331 labourers, out of a total for the Province of 5,436, were imported into the Sylhet district. On this point the sub divisional officer of Karimganj writes—

"Immigration is still on the increase from the North-Western Provinces, Oudh, and Behar. The total number of labourers who came from those Provinces in 1885 was only 1,432, the number has more than doubled in the last three years. This is due, besides the scarcity now prevalent in those districts, to the excellent connection established between the Chargola valley gardens and the Ghazipur district."

Similarly, under the head of importations from Madras, the great bulk (218 out of 285 labourers imported) went to the Sylhet district, and the Deputy-Commissioner observes—

"Madras labour is in great favour on some gardens The difficulties in the way of getting it are serious, but the number of immigrants from that Presidency is increasing."

As regards the decrease which occurred under the head of Assam, no explanation is forthcoming. It took place in the Lakhimpur and Nowgong districts.

Female immigrants.

5. The proportion of women amongst the immigrants is shown below:—

Locality of recruitment.	Percentage of women to men among							
	Sardári immigrants.		Contractors' immigrants.		Non-Act immigrants.		All adult immigrants.	
	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.
Bengal	46·1	44·2	49·5	50·1	49·2	49·9	48 4	48 1
North-Western Provinces, Oudh, and Behar.	37 7	44·2	37·4	41 4	37·7	39·3	37·6	40·9
Chota Nagpur	46·3	44·5	42·3	45·6	42 6	42·9	44·2	44·7
Total	45·0	41·4	42·7	46 2	40 3	42·0	43·0	44·2

These figures do not call for any detailed remarks. It is of course natural, as has been observed in previous reports, that the proportion of women should be greatest among immigrants from Bengal, which forms the nearest recruiting ground for Assam, and it is equally natural that the proportion of women should diminish according to the distance of the districts of recruitment from the labour districts. If the proportion of women who came during 1888 from the several localities of recruitment is compared, the highest proportion is found in each case amongst contractors' immigrants, though the differences are inconsiderable, and this result is probably due, as observed by the Deputy-Commissioner of Darrang, to the fact that planters often make it a *sine quâ non* that contractors should supply as many female immigrants as possible. It is satisfactory to notice that in regard to immigrants imported from the more distant recruiting grounds,

namely, from the North-Western Provinces, Oudh, and Behar, the proportion of women increased in the case of all classes of immigrants. Taking the year's importations as a whole, and comparing the results with those of the previous year, it is found that the proportions are as follows:—

	Per cent. 1887.	1888.
Male	58·5	56·1
Female	41·5	43·9

The tendency, which is towards a larger proportionate importation of women, has therefore been in the right direction, and it is hoped that it will be maintained.

Contractors' and sardári labourers

6. The following table gives the number of Act (distinguishing sardári and contractors') coolies imported into each district during the past two years, with the number of sardárs' certificates granted and the average number of coolies imported by each sardár:—

District.	Sardári coolies.		Number of certificates granted to garden-sardars.	Average recruits per sardár.	Contractors' coolies.		Percentage of increase or decrease of importations during 1888 as compared with 1887.	
	1887.	1888.	1888.	1888.	1887.	1888.	Sardári.	Contractors.
Cachar	1,022	1,831	655	2·7	1,112	684	+79·1	—38·4
Sylhet	662	910	279	3·2	265	74	+37·4	—72·0
Total of Surma Valley	1,684	2,741	934	2·9	1,377	758	+62·7	—44·9
Kámrúp	98	154	36	4·2	12	.....	+57·1	—100·0
Darrang	2,010	2,213	297	7·4	1,910	1,916	+10·1	+ 0·3
Nowgong	178	238	199	1·1	375	756	+33·7	+101·6
Sibságar	2,798	3,530	923	3·8	3,995	3,282	+26·1	— 17·8
Lakhimpur	3,469	3,560	400	8·9	3,733	3,453	+ 2·6	— 7·5
Total of Assam Valley	8,553	9,695	1,855	5·2	10,025	9,407	+13·3	— 6·1
Grand Total	10,237	12,436	2,789	4·4	11,402	10,165	+21·4	— 10·8

The most noteworthy point in the above table is that in the case of all districts in the Province an increase took place in the number of labourers imported through the agency of garden-sardárs, the percentage of increase as compared with the previous year varying between a maximum of 79·1 in Cachar and a minimum of 2·6 in Lakhimpur. On the other hand, the number of labourers imported through contractors diminished in all cases except Darrang and Nowgong. For the Province, as a whole, the percentage of increase in the case of sardári coolies was 21·4, as compared with 12·5 in the previous year, while importations of contractors' coolies, which showed an increase of 56·9 per cent. in 1887, have fallen by 10·8 per cent. in the year under report, as compared with the previous year. It will be noticed that the percentage by which sardári importations increased in the Surma Valley (62·7) was far larger than in the case of the Assam Valley (13·3), while the lesser resort to contractors was more marked in the Surma Valley than in the latter. As a whole, the figures clearly point to a very substantial extension in the results of recruiting by garden-sardárs, although the number of certificates (2,789) granted to sardárs during the year under report was considerably smaller than that (3,201) granted in the previous year. The variations shown by the figures in the extent to which recourse is had in the several districts to contractors and garden-sardárs respectively for the purposes of labour-recruitment, and also in the average number of labourers imported by each sardár, are not susceptible of any sufficient explanation; but the fact appears to be undoubted that, speaking generally, the popularity of the sardári system is shown by the yearly statistics to be established and increasing, while the reverse is the case as regards the agency of contractors. It must, however, be remembered that, as pointed out in paragraph 1 of this report, the figures here given for sardári coolies probably include a very considerable number (so far as the Assam Valley is concerned), who were recruited by uncertificated sardárs, and were put under contract at Dhubri.

The district reports do not contain any notice of specific cases in which certificated sardárs were found to have brought up unregistered recruits; but the Deputy-Commissioner of Cachar expresses an opinion that the practice exists, and recommends that the attention of managers should be drawn to the provisions of the law (Section 151 of the Act I. of 1882) under which it is illegal.

Cost of importation

7. The district reports give no information under this head which adds anything material to what has been stated in previous* Provincial Reports.

* See paragraph 14 Chap. I of Report for 1884
" " 12 " " 1885.
" " 11 " " 1886

In Cachar no adequate enquiries appear to have been made. One manager, however, estimates the cost of a contractor's coolie at Rs. 45 and another manager at Rs. 54. The first of these gentlemen adds that he found it possible to procure free immigrants from the North-West Provinces at an average cost of Rs. 15 per head.

The Deputy-Commissioner of Sylhet states that the cost of an adult labourer imported under Act I. of 1882 varies from Rs. 60 to Rs. 70, whereas a labourer brought up under the unlicensed system costs from Rs. 17 to Rs. 20.

In Kánrúp one manager gives the cost of a sardári coolie as Rs. 46, and another as Rs. 66. In Darrang a sardári coolie is said to cost from Rs. 60 to Rs. 70, and a contractor's coolie from Rs. 70 to Rs. 80. In Nowgong, the cost seems to vary considerably, from Rs. 43 to Rs. 75 in the case of sardári coolies, and from Rs. 73 to Rs. 85 in the case of contractors' coolies. In Sibságar also similar variations exist, the cost of a sardári coolie being put down at sums ranging from Rs. 46 to Rs. 74, and that of a contractor's coolie at sums ranging from Rs. 81 to Rs. 115. Lastly, in Lakhimpur, the cost per adult labourer imported through contractors is said to exceed Rs. 100, while the cost of a sardári coolie varies between Rs. 60 to Rs. 70. The Deputy-Commissioner of Lakhimpur, however, mentions a case in which it was found possible to import sardári coolies at an average cost of about Rs. 47 each.

As above stated, these particulars do not add materially to the information which we at present possess on this point. The variations in cost as between the several districts, and frequently as between the several gardens in the same district, are considerable, and are not susceptible of explanation, except that in such a matter, and especially when the agency of sardárs is employed, the cost of importation must depend very much on the nature of the arrangements made by the managers, and whether they tend to economy or the reverse. It may be added that the variations reported are probably in many cases apparent rather than real, being due to the different ways in which different gardens calculate the charges on this account. The one fact which comes out very clearly is that almost everywhere it is cheaper to recruit labourers through sardárs than through contractors.

In connection with the cost of recruiting, it has been alleged that sardárs sent to procure labourers from the recruiting districts sometimes return with the tale that in order to avoid undue delay in their operations, they had found it necessary to make various irregular payments not only to subordinate Government officials, such as the police and registration establishments, but also to village headmen and others. It is, of course, impossible to determine how far (if at all) these statements are correct.

Transit of immigrants to the Assam Valley

8. Immigrants to the Assam Valley districts come *viâ* Dhubri, either by the Kaunia-Jatrapur route or direct by steamer from Goalundo, the very large majority by the former. During the year under report, the total number who started from the recruiting districts for Dhubri was 31,294, against 25,647 in the previous year, and was the largest number on record. Of the number who started from the recruiting districts, 31,217 arrived at Dhubri, against 25,635 in the preceding year. Owing to the serious outbreak of cholera which occurred in the months of February to April 1888, and which will be further noticed later on (*see* paragraph 11 of this report), the number of deaths amongst the immigrants *en route* from the recruiting districts to Dhubri was considerably larger than in 1887, having aggregated 21, against 3 in the year last named. Similarly, and possibly owing to some extent at all events to the same cause, the number of coolies who absconded before reaching Dhubri increased from 8 to 39, and the number who were detained by sickness from 2 to 27. On the other hand, the number of additions which occurred rose from 1 to 10, the net result being that the percentage of arrivals at Dhubri to departures from the recruiting districts fell from more than 99 9 in the previous year to 99·7. Of the 31,217 immigrants who arrived at Dhubri, 2,440, to whom 1,913 dependents were attached, were sardári, that is, they were persons who, after being recruited by certificated sardárs, were registered and put under contract in the recruiting districts, while of the balance (26,864), the number of those who were put under contract at Dhubri was 16,541, to whom were attached 9,554 persons as dependents, and 766 persons (*i.e.*, 394 immigrants with 372 dependents) passed on free from Dhubri. All that can be said of the 766 persons last mentioned is that they were free immigrants who passed through the Dhubri depôts and were despatched, at the wish of certain employers, to their destination without being put under contract at Dhubri. The precise circumstances under which these immigrants were not put under contract at Dhubri are being further enquired into. The statistics regarding the duration of the contracts entered into at Dhubri under Section

111 of the Act, and regarding the health of the immigrants at Dhubri and during transit on the Brahmaputra, are dealt with in paragraph 11 and 28 of this report. In addition to the above, 2,551 immigrants, against 859 in the previous year, were shipped at Goalundo for conveyance direct to the tea-gardens, and there is thus reason to suppose that the popularity of this route is to some extent reviving, as was predicted might be the case in consequence of the facilities offered by the more frequent departure of steamers from Goalundo and of the fact that it involves fewer changes than the Kaunia-Dhubri route. It is worthy of note that of the 17,464 immigrants and 8,587 dependents who arrived at Dhubri and were medically examined, 1,205 were rejected by the Civil Surgeon (against 526 rejections out of a total number of 15,554 immigrants with 5,759 dependents examined in the previous year). This medical examination, which now embraces not only fitness to travel but also fitness to labour, is an arrangement made outside the provisions of the Act, but in accordance with the wishes of the principal parties concerned. Of the 1,205 immigrants who were rejected, 669 were sent on as dependents by the depôt managers, 324 were sent on as free labourers, 210 were returned to their homes by the depôt managers, and 2 were returned to their homes by the Civil Surgeon. The extent to which persons rejected by the Civil Surgeon are sent on as dependents requires to be carefully watched. The Chief Commissioner has heard complaints of persons thus rejected being sent up to the gardens as dependents, and even of their being attached as dependents to persons with whom they were in no way connected. As in the previous year, immigrants were carried both from Goalundo and Dhubri in the fast steamers of the weekly or daily services, and undue detention in the depôts at Dhubri was prevented by a rule which requires agents to ship coolies by the first steamer offering, provided that the vessel complies with the requirements of the Inland Emigration Act.

Transit of immigrants to the Surma Valley

9. In paragraph 2 of last year's report the circumstances were explained under which it is not possible to procure accurate information, independently of the returns supplied by garden managers, of the yearly flow of newly-arrived immigrants into the Surma Valley, and it was said that efforts would be made to procure more complete statistics under this head. Attempts to procure such statistics have been made during the year under report; but the difficulty still remains that a large proportion of the immigrants do not make use of the depots, and consequently altogether escape registration. On the other hand, the Embarkation Agent at Goalundo up to April 1889 registered only coolies recruited by contractors licensed under the Act, of whom 552 were on their way to Cachar and 81 to Sylhet Thus, in Cachar, while the total number of newly-imported labourers, as returned by the garden managers, aggregated 5,859, only 3,091 passed through the depôts, and in Sylhet of 9,595 newly-imported labourers, the depôt returns only account for 2,414. It is to be feared that the circumstances of the Surma Valley generally, and especially the extent to which free immigration, properly so-called, takes place to that valley, render it useless to hope that accurate statistics will ever be obtained except such as are supplied by the garden managers, but, so far as the steamer traffic is concerned, the Chief Commissioner believes that he may count upon the steamer agents supplying such statistics as lie in their power. Indeed, the local agent of the India General Steam Navigation Company has been good enough to consent to supply the Deputy-Commissioner of Sylhet with a weekly report of the coolies brought up by steamer and landed at the various steamer stations of that district from the 1st January 1889, and the Chief Commissioner has recently asked the managing agents of that Company if they will allow their local agents to supply similar statistics to the Deputy-Commissioner of Cachar. From the district reports for 1888 it is unfortunately not possible to judge of the extent to which the fast daily steamer service is superseding country boats as the mode of transit, but it is clear that the number of coolies carried by steamer is increasing, and the Deputy-Commissioners of Sylhet and Cachar have been directed to give their best attention to the matter, and to lose no opportunity of making such suggestions as may seem practicable, with a view to increase the popularity and lead to the extended use of the steamer service.* The question of regulating by rule, as is done in the Assam Valley, the medical equipment of steamers plying in the Surma Valley was considered by the Chief Commissioner during the year under report; but various difficulties were found to exist, the chief of which was due to the fact that the great mass of the coolies travelling in the Surma Valley are not, as is the case with those travelling on the Brahmaputra, "labourers" within the meaning of Act I. of 1882, but free immigrants, and it is, therefore, impossible to bring them under the operation of some of the most important rules

* In this connection the following passage may be quoted from the Annual Report on Inland Emigration in Bengal for the year 1888 :—

"Of the 652 emigrants who were forwarded by licensed contractors to Cachar, 417 were embarked in vessels of the daily steam service and the remaining 235 in country boats, and of the [illegible] emigrants forwarded to Sylhet, 52 were embarked in steamers, and the remaining 29 in country boats, so that of the entire despatches to Cachar and [illegible]et aggregating 663 emigrants, 469, or 70·7 per cent., travelled by steamers, against 92 emigrants, or 6·05 per cent in 1887, and 101 emigrants, or 2[illegible] cent., proceeded in country boats, against 1,428, or 93·9 per cent., in 1887 The advantages of transport by steamer are clearly being appreciated, and the protracted country-boat journey, with all its risks, will probably be discontinued hereafter."

which might be framed under the Act. It was, therefore, decided to postpone considering the matter, but, now that the steamer traffic is increasing, it is necessary that the question should be again taken up, and this has accordingly been done.* The Chief Commissioner feels sure that, in dealing with this question, he may rely on the cordial co-operation of the authorities of the steamer companies, to whom it must be a matter of the first importance that nothing should be left undone to encourage resort to the steamer service by persons, whether travelling as "labourers" within the meaning of the Act or as free immigrants.

* See paragraph 24 of Circular No. 43 dated the 26th May 1889 at page v. of Appendix A attached to this report.

Debarkation depôts.

10. The following table shows how far the debarkation depôts were used during 1888:—

District.	Number of depôts.	Total number of immigrants to district.	Number that passed through depôts.	Number detained at depôts. Through want of a guide.	Number detained at depôts. In hospital.	Number detained at depôts. For segregation.	Contracts cancelled at depôt.	Expenditure. Buildings.	Expenditure. Establishments, &c.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
								Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.
Cachar	2	5,859	3,091	.....	125	...	2	670 11 0	3,211 7 0
Sylhet	4	9,595	2,414	4	22	...	.....	94 1 6	970 12 11
Darrang	1	6,206	4,002	3,581	136	...	.....	162 4 3	1,051 5 7
Nowgong *	1	1,957	2,470	321	71	180	1	... .	1,423 3 7
Sibsagar	3	10,884	9,664†	5,378	197	...	.....	783 3 3	2,525 1 4
Lakhimpur	1	11,515	10,243	6,333	152	93	.....	286 9 3	1,683 10 3
Total	12	46,016	31,884	15,617	703	273	3	1,996 13 3	10,865 8 8
Total for 1887	12	36,282	22,013	8,265	366	...	6	1,496 7 9	10,189 6 6

* The entries against Nowgong in columns 4, 5, 6, and 7 include labourers for debarkation at Dhansirimukh destined for gardens in the Golighat sub-division in the district of Sibsagar, and hence the figures in column 4 exceed those in column 3. The number of labourers for Dhansirimukh included in each column is as follows:—

Column 4 803
" 5 6
" 6 17
" 7 43

† This number includes 1,675 immigrants destined for North Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh.

There was no change in the number of depôts during the year under report, except that a new depôt was opened at Fenchuganj, in the district of Sylhet. The number of coolies who used the depôts increased considerably in the case of all districts except Sylhet, a result which was partly due to the increase in importations of labourers, and partly to the prevalence of cholera in the Assam Valley during the months of February to April 1888. In the Surma Valley the number of coolies who passed through the depôts did not increase *pari passu* with the increased importations reported by managers, and in Sylhet only about one-fourth of the immigrants used the depôts. Two new barracks were erected at the Silghat depôt in the Nowgong district, and at Dibrugarh new depôt buildings are being erected in place of the old buildings, which were only of a temporary character. All the depôts appear to have been sufficiently inspected during the year.

Mortality at Dhubri and during transit on Brahmaputra.

11. The health statistics of the immigrants during the year, both at Dhubri and while in transit on the Brahmaputra, were seriously affected by a lamentable outbreak of cholera which occurred during the opening months of 1888, and which, according to all the information received, originated on the Bengal side of Dhubri. This epidemic commenced in January, increased in virulence during February and March, and finally abated in April. The measures which were taken to mitigate the effects, and prevent the spread of the outbreak, are fully described in the Chief Commissioner's Resolution No. 2,575, dated 7th September 1888. In consequence of the outbreak, the Bengal Government consented, with the previous sanction of the Governor-General in Council, to prohibit emigration as a temporary measure from certain parts of the Lower Provinces where cholera was very prevalent, and various precautionary measures were adopted in Assam in regard to the licensing of vessels, and the provision at the depôts of such additional accommodation as was necessary for the proper care of infected batches of coolies. It may be added that after the epidemic subsided, the entire question of the procedure to be followed on the occurrence of an outbreak of cholera amongst the immigrants was carefully reviewed by the Chief Commissioner, with the result that extended power was given to the Embarkation Agent at Dhubri, with the view of enabling that officer to reduce on such an emergency the number of passengers which the steamers

are ordinarily authorised to carry, and further, if the circumstances should justify such a course, to refuse the grant of a license, or temporarily to suspend the license if granted, in the case of any particular steamer on board of which cholera may have appeared to a serious extent, and which the Civil Surgeon may believe to have become infected, until the necessary remedial measures have been adopted. It may be explained that there is no reason to fear these arrangements leading to a block of immigrants at Dhubri, because vessels which do not ordinarily carry immigrants are always available, or could always at once be made available, in the event of the accommodation on board the ordinary immigrant vessels running short, owing to the number of passengers which they are authorised to carry being restricted, or to the licenses of some of them being suspended. Measures have also been taken to secure the prompt reporting of any such outbreak, and the immediate communication of the fact to the various magistrates concerned, with a view to such arrangements being made at the several depôts for additional accommodation, medical comforts, temporary establishment, or otherwise, as may appear to be called for by the circumstances. Lastly, an important change has been made, whereby, on the occurrence of a serious outbreak of cholera, it is now open to managers to make arrangements for the immediate transport of coolies from the depôts to the gardens on the condition that they agree to make arrangements in accordance with certain rules* which have been prescribed by the Chief Commissioner, in consultation with the Deputy-Surgeon-General, for the purpose of providing for the segregation of the coolies, both in transit to the gardens and on arrival at their destinations. The Chief Commissioner sincerely trusts that the measures which have thus been taken will have some appreciable effect, at all events in reducing the mortality on any future occasion if it should unhappily arise; and Mr. Fitzpatrick desires to take the present opportunity of recognizing the zeal and energy displayed by the officers of this Administration in connection with the epidemic of 1888, and also the readiness with which suggestions made for the purpose of remedying what appeared to be defective sanitary arrangements on the steamers were accepted and adopted by the local representatives of the steamer companies. It remains only to notice the extent of the mortality which took place amongst the immigrants at Dhubri during transit on the Brahmaputra and at the several depôts in the Assam Valley during the year under report, and which, the Chief Commissioner regrets to say, reached the high figure of 838. This total was made up as follows:—

* Judicial Department Notification No. 8, dated the 8th February 1889.

	Number of deaths.		
	From cholera.	From other causes.	Total.
At Dhubri	224	15	239
On board steamers between Dhubri and Dibrugarh	150	21	171
At ports of debarkation—			
Gauhâti	144	4	148
Tezpur	76	2	78
Silghat	17	2	19
Dhansirimukh	8	1	9
Kokilamukh	55	14	69
Disangmukh	15	5	20
Nigriting	9*	1	10
Dibrugarh (Mohanamukh)	73	2	75
Total	771	67	838

* Latest figure furnished by Deputy Commissioner of Sibsâgar.

Mortality during transit to the Surma Valley districts.

12. As was pointed out in paragraph 32 of last year's report, the information available in regard to the mortality which actually occurs amongst immigrants during transit to the Surma Valley districts is very defective, more especially because way-bills are not prescribed in the case of free immigrants, that is, of immigrants who are not recruited by contractors or garden-sardârs under the Act. In the case of immigrants who passed through the depôts the following figures are given by the district officers:—

District.	Year.	Number of immigrants who left Goalundo.	Deaths.			
			En route.	In hospital.	Total.	Proportion per mille.
Cachar.....	1888	3,246	99	40	139	42·8
	1887	2,840	83	29	112	39·4
Sylhet	1888	2,537	21	9	30	11·8
	1887	2,694	Not stated.		43	15·9

There was thus an increase in the rate of mortality in the case of Cachar, and a decrease in Sylhet. Of the total number of deaths in transit 119 of those which

occurred in the case of Cachar, and 28 of those which occurred in the case of Sylhet were due to cholera. The Deputy-Commissioner of Cachar observes that the mortality seems to have been heaviest between Narainganj and Karimganj.

The Chief Commissioner has no comments to offer on these figures, except that, as explained above (paragraph 9), he has separately taken up the question of the medical and sanitary equipment of steamers plying in the Surma Valley, with a view to prescribe such rules as may seem to be possible for improving the existing conditions under which immigrants travel on those steamers. It is, Mr. Fitzpatrick believes, mainly by taking steps in this direction, and by providing sufficient opportunities for inspection *en route*, that improvement is to be looked for in the health statistics of the immigrants to the Surma Valley districts, after they enter this Province.

Cases of kidnapping and enticement.

13. On the 17th August 1888, a Circular was issued by the Chief Commissioner instructing Deputy-Commissioners to make thorough and searching enquiries into any complaints which might be made from time to time as to persons having been induced to enter into contracts for service in, or to immigrate to, Assam by the use of fraudulent methods on the part of crimps and persons engaged in recruiting. It was added that in the event of there being reason to believe that any offence had been committed, steps should be taken, in communication, when necessary, with the Magistrate of the district of recruitment, to bring the offender or offenders to justice. This was followed by a further Circular, dated the 6th October 1888, directing Deputy-Commissioners to submit every two months a statement in a form prescribed, showing the nature of the complaint made in each case of alleged fraudulent recruiting, the action taken thereon, and the final result. In this Circular it was further directed—

(1) that at Dhubri all female emigrants not accompanied by their husbands should be examined, not in the line with the others, but individually apart, the inspecting officer taking care to see that no *arkati*, sardár, contractor's peon, or other such person connected with immigration business, is present;

(2) that in the labour districts, when such women have entered into contracts under Section 111 at a garden, the officer inspecting should pay special attention to the examination of them regarding the execution of their contracts.

The following is an extract from the report of the Deputy-Commissioner of Goálpára in regard to the proceedings taken at Dhubri in connection with cases of fraudulent or irregular recruitment:—

"Inquiries are made in consequence of—

"(1) Communications from the district of recruitment either in the form of a letter from the Magistrate or District Superintendent of Police, or by post from the relations of the person supposed to have been fraudulently recruited.

"(2) Complaints are made directly by the person concerned at Dhubri at the time of registration.

"(3) Inquiries are instituted by the registering officer when he finds a young married or unmarried woman coming for registration unaccompanied by any relations, when in his opinion there seems to be reason for supposing that the immigrant may have been enticed away from her husband, or her parents or guardian.

"Of the first kind of inquiry there were 42. The number of cases instituted* in consequence of these inquiries, as far as can be ascertained, was 27. The number of persons punished was two. As a rule, no action is taken by the relations in these cases.

* *i. e.*, complaints made in Court by the coolies themselves or their relations, and prosecutions instituted by Government officers.

"There were 14 complaints made directly by the emigrants themselves. In these cases the emigrants were returned to the district of recruitment, and directed to appear before the Magistrate to prosecute the accused persons. Generally, the Magistrates were also written to by me; but here again the coolies do not proceed with their cases. The number of complaints actually instituted by the coolies before the Magistrate of the district of recruitment was 14, and I have not been informed that any person was convicted in any of these cases.

"Lastly, I made inquiries on my own motion regarding 40 persons. In six cases there were actual grounds of complaint, and complaints have been instituted. In 14 cases no trace of the persons described † could be found, which shows that names and addresses are frequently altered when a coolie is recruited, to avoid identification no doubt. In eight cases the next of kin to the immigrant, regarding whom inquiry was being made, did not raise any objection to the immigrant having left her home."

† *i. e.*, the persons as described in the medical certificates prepared by the forwarding agents at the time of registration of contract.

"Of course, it is a very difficult thing for complaints of this sort, especially when the coolie herself is quite willing, and is in fact an aider and abetter, to be brought home. There is the initial difficulty connected with identification, and there is the further difficulty caused by distance; and the greater the delay, the greater the chance of all concerned accepting the facts and refraining from pushing matters to the end; so nearly all inquiries regarding fraudulent recruitment are infructuous."

As regards the prosecution of cases of this nature, the Deputy-Commissioner further explains that in practice it is found convenient that such prosecutions should be

carried out in the recruiting district, where the alleged offence was committed and the witnesses reside, rather than at Dhubri. This no doubt is correct; but with reference to the portion of the above extract in which it is said that "the coolies do not proceed with their cases," it appears to the Chief Commissioner that the matter should not be left in the hands of the coolies; but that if there is any good prospect of a conviction, the Magistrate should take up the case *suo motu*. The last portion of the extract apparently refers only to cases where the woman herself is a party to the transaction. These, however, can hardly be called cases of fraudulent recruitment, although they may be cases of "enticement." In connection with the extract generally it should be explained, in order to prevent the number of cases of this class being supposed to be greater than it actually is, that of the 42 cases under the first head, 13 are also included in the following summary of cases of forcible kidnapping or fraudulent enticement, which were brought to notice during the year in the labour districts, more properly so-called; while, under the second head, it should be understood that the number of complaints given (14) shows the number of immigrants who made complaints at Dhubri. As a matter of fact, 14 immigrants in all made complaints in three cases, and of these fourteen, the larger majority relate to a case which is dealt with in the following summary under the district of Sibságar.

In accordance with a further instruction which was embodied in the first of the circulars summarized above, Deputy-Commissioners have included in their present reports an abstract of all cases of forcible kidnapping or fraudulent enticement which were brought to their notice during the year under report. The following is a summary of these abstracts :—

In *Cachar*, it is reported that no cases of this nature were brought to notice in the sadr sub-division. In the Hailákándi sub-division, thirteen complaints were made by labourers. Full details regarding these have not been supplied by the Deputy-Commissioner, but it is clear that the majority cannot be called cases either of forcible kidnapping or fraudulent enticement. Enquiry into all of these cases has either been made locally on the gardens where the complaints were preferred, or is in progress in the district of recruitment.

Kidnapping.

In *Sylhet*, the Deputy-Commissioner reports that "no case of fraudulent recruitment came to light during the year under report, except one instance, where some boys were said to have been kidnapped from Hazaribagh. They were sent back there, and the sardár sentenced to three years' rigorous imprisonment under Section 363,* Indian Penal Code." This case was tried at Hazaribagh.

In *Kámrúp*, it is said that no cases of fraudulent recruitment were brought to notice during the year.

In *Darrang*, the Deputy-Commissioner reports that complaints were made in four cases, all of which turned out on enquiry to be false Two of these cases related to the alleged kidnapping of minors, whose ages were certified by the Civil Surgeon to be 17 and 20 years respectively, *i e.*, over the age of minority, and one case related to a woman who was shown to have been sent to Assam at her own request, and to have signed a five-year agreement at Dhubri. In the case last mentioned, the contract was subsequently cancelled by mutual consent. The fourth case was shown by enquiry to be absolutely false.

As regards fraudulent recruitment generally, the Deputy-Commissioner of this district writes:—

"With regard to fraudulent recruiting, I believe that the cases are far fewer than what is generally surmised. Of those brought to my notice during the year under review, I found absolute proof that they were entirely false. Moreover, it must be remembered that coolies have now so many opportunities of representing their grievances, almost every garden possessing a coolie lawyer or receiving visits from some poor but philanthropical Babú, that few complaints on this subject will remain uninvestigated. The contractor also finds that fraudulent recruiting does not pay; as, if a coolie's agreement is cancelled on this ground, the Manager at once demands a refund of all charges incurred in importation."

In *Nowgong*, two cases are reported to have occurred, in one of which three coolies complained of having been fraudulently recruited. The matter was brought to notice by the Manager of the garden, who, acting on the advice of the Deputy-Commissioner, let the men return to their homes. In this case unfortunately the Deputy-Commissioner omitted to make further enquiries as directed by the Circular of the 17th August 1888. The second case related to a gang of coolies who were said to have been forcibly taken to Assam by *arkatis* at Gya while they were *en route* to the Terai. In this case it is clear from the enquiry made in Nowgong that the coolies, however they may have been originally got hold of, eventually went willingly to Assam, and the probabilities are that they received a bonus for so going.

In *Sibságar*, the Deputy-Commissioner reports that nine cases were brought to notice in 1888, against five cases in 1887. Of the five cases which occurred in 1887, three were dismissed, in one a conviction was obtained, and one is still pending Of the nine cases brought to notice in the year under report, three were dismissed, in two convictions were obtained, and four were pending at the close of the year. The general nature of the 14 cases which occurred during the two years will be apparent from the following remarks. Three of the cases originated in complaints made in the districts of recruitment and related to the alleged abduction of married women. These cases were all dismissed by the Magistrates who investigated them in the districts of recruitment. In one of these cases the woman on whose behalf the complaint was made declared that she had voluntarily left her home for Assam. Four of the cases related to abduction by force or fraud of gangs of coolies (varying from 20 to 130 persons in number), three of which were recruited for gardens in the Bengal Duárs. In two of these cases two *arkatis* were sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment with fine under Section 342 of the Indian Penal Code (wrongful confinement), and the other two cases are under enquiry in Bengal. In one of the cases last referred to, the probability appears to be in favour of the view that the coolies were not brought to Assam by force or fraud, inasmuch as the enquiries made in Sibságar showed that the two sardárs who had originally recruited the batch had been sent back to Bengal from Assam for recruiting purposes. Of the remaining seven cases, one only presents any peculiar features; two were dismissed, in one the principal accused has been sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment under Section 417 of the Indian Penal Code (cheating), and two of his abettors to six months' rigorous imprisonment each and three are still under enquiry. being cases where complaints have been made of enticement or abduction of the ordinary sort. In the case referred to as being of an unusual nature, nine coolies from Ghazipur complained on arrival at the garden that they had been sent up by the recruiting sardár to Dhubri on false pretences, and that they had been brought on from Dhubri against their will. They were returned to their homes; but it may be noted that this was not a case in which the Dhubri arrangements were in any way to blame inasmuch as the coolies refused to enter into contracts at Dhubri, and were then induced somehow or other to proceed to the garden as ordinary passengers, in the hope that they would alter their minds there. All that was found possible was to make those responsible for sending them on pay their repatriation expenses, which came to a considerable sum.

In *Lakhimpur*, the Deputy-Commissioner reports that thirteen cases of alleged fraudulent recruitment were brought to notice Of these, nine cases related to women who were said to have been abducted or enticed away from their homes. It is not necessary to describe these cases in detail, as, from the Deputy-Commissioner's report, it would appear that they were all of the ordinary type, and in two cases only were convictions obtained. In one of these two *arkatis* were sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment each under Section 417 of the Indian Penal Code (cheating); and in the other, which was not a case connected with recruitment, the accused was found guilty of enticing away a girl, and was sentenced to 15 days' rigorous imprisonment under Section 498 of the Indian Penal Code In two cases complaints were made that gangs of coolies on their way to gardens in Bengal were kidnapped and forcibly taken to Assam In one of these cases the labourers could not be traced, and in the other the result is not known. Of the two remaining cases, enquiry showed one to be false; and the other, which is of the usual type, is still under enquiry in Bengal.

To the above remarks, which are taken from the reports of the local officers, the Chief Commissioner will only add that the reports of the judicial proceedings in the Tiphuk case, and the other great kidnapping case referred to by the Deputy-Commissioner of Sibságar, in which a conviction has been obtained, have reached him, and that he finds in them no ground for altering the opinion expressed in the last report, *viz.*, that it is altogether impossible to accept the suggestion that large batches of coolies, numbering 50 or 100, or even more, could be forced or intimidated into entering into contracts before a Government officer against their will. Some of them, at all events, would be certain to take courage and rebel, and even if they did not do so at Dhubri, they would complain of their own accord as soon as they got clear of it, and not wait, as they did in both of these cases, until after a considerable lapse of time, the matter being first brought to notice in one case by a complaint lodged by the employer whom they had deserted. In saying this, the Chief Commissioner does not for a moment mean to question the decision of the judicial officer, which does not go beyond this, that these large batches of coolies were originally seized when on their way to gardens in Bengal, and compelled by force or intimidation to proceed some distance on their way to Assam. All he means to say is that some other means for overcoming their reluctance were found before they reached Dhubri, and the probability is that they were bribed into abandoning the service for which they were previously destined.

General [illegible] the [illegible] of the immigrant [illegible]

14. Perhaps the most important question which arises in connection with these cases, so far as the Province of Assam is concerned, for it is beyond the limits of Assam that the mischief originates, is the extent to which the establishment of Dhubri as a contracting station, and the system pursued there, are responsible for such abuses as occur. The Chief Commissioner thinks it necessary to refer to this question at some little length, because, though he is far from thinking that the existing state of things, so far as Dhubri is concerned, is the best possible, he finds that in some quarters an undue share of the blame is thrown on it, and that crude suggestions for amendment are thrown out, proceeding apparently from the idea that if we could get rid of Dhubri, things would be sure to come right.

15. As regards the system adopted for the verification of contracts at Dhubri, the following extracts of letters from the Deputy-Commissioner and the Commissioner will afford a sufficient description of it.

In a letter, No. 733, dated 3rd December 1888, Mr. Godfrey, the Deputy-Commissioner, who had then but recently joined, but who states that the system adopted by him in no respect differed from that adopted by his predecessor, after referring to the medical examination of the coolies, proceeds as follows :—

"6. Soon after the medical certificate has been signed, the Deputy-Commissioner appears on the scene. The coolies remain drawn up in line, their names are called out from the medical certificate, the Deputy-Commissioner goes round with the contractor, and sees that each coolie answers to his name; then the depôt man addresses the coolies in the same manner as when they were addressed while drawn up for medical examination. The questions are—

(1) Where are you going?
(2) What work are the men to do?
(3) What work are the women to do?
(4) (*a*) What wages will the men get for the first three years? (*b*) for the next two years?
(5) (*a*) and (*b*) same for the women.
(6) At what rate will you get rice?
(7) Supposing it is dearer than Rs. 3 a maund, who will pay the difference?

"The coolies, who have of course been properly instructed, shout out the answers, which are as follows, to the several questions stated above :—

(1) Assam.	(5) (*a*) Rs. 4.
(2) Hoeing.	(*b*) „ 5.
(3) Plucking.	(6) Rs. 3 a maund.
(4) (*a*) Rs. 5.	(7) The employer will pay the difference.
(*b*) „ 6.	

"All these answers are shouted out, as far as I have seen, in a most enthusiastic way, and no one who has observed the demeanour of the coolies while being questioned would say that they were at all unwilling to proceed.

"7. When this catechism is over, the Deputy-Commissioner sits down at a table in the depôt compound under a tree, the contractor and his clerk and some depôt peons and the Assistant-Surgeon being in attendance. The coolies are called up one by one. One of the contractor's men puts the pen into the coolie's hand and a depôt clerk guides the coolie's hand to the proper place in the form of agreement, and causes the coolie's hand to affix a mark in token of execution of the contract. As soon as he has signed, the Deputy-Commissioner asks him generally whether he is going of his own free will, and for how long, and if satisfied that the coolie is really a free agent and knows what he is doing, the Deputy-Commissioner signs the contract. One copy is there and then made over to the coolie. It is to be noted that each coolie is separately questioned by the Deputy-Commissioner about his willingness to proceed to Assam.

* * * *

"10. I have had several instances in which intending emigrants have shown an unwillingness to go on, and in these cases I have invariably refused to register their agreements. Again, cases are common of coolies who have been entered by the forwarding agents for five years preferring to go for three years, and in these cases the terms are invariably altered to suit the wishes of the coolie."

It may be added to this that when the hour of embarkation arrives, the coolies of each depôt are marched across the gangway in single file, the Civil Surgeon standing at the end of it, and checking their numbers as they pass.

The following is an extract from a report, dated the 15th December 1888, by Mr. C. J. Lyall, Officiating Commissioner of the Assam Valley Districts, of his inspection of the procedure above described :—

* * * * *

"7. The verification of contracts, that is, the ascertainment of the labourers' willingness to proceed to and labour in the labour district before putting them on contract under Section 111, is conducted in such a way that intimidation is absolutely out of the question. I saw no signs whatever of the coolies being other than perfectly free agents. At one depôt, that of the Assam Company, a coolie said he was not willing to go, and told a story of having been beaten by a peon at the depôt at Lakhiserai. Other coolies who had come up with him were questioned, and did not corroborate his statement. But the man was ordered to be returned to his home with his wife and child. At another depôt an emigrant had absconded during the night with two female emigrants. That this

was possible shows that the surveillance to which he was subjected in the sleeping sheds could not have been very strict. With the exception I have alluded to, I saw nothing but smiling willing faces, and heard nothing but hearty assent to the questions asked of each labourer, both collectively and individually, by the Deputy-Commissioner before he signs the contract.

"8. A large number of the emigrants were women, and a considerable proportion of these were not accompanied by their husbands. I heard the Deputy-Commissioner examine these as directed in the Chief Commissioner's Circular Order No. 49, dated the 6th October 1888. Most of them said they were widows, and gave their husbands' names, and said how long ago they had died. A few said they had been turned out of their husband's house. In all doubtful cases Mr. Godfrey makes a note of the case, and sends it to the district of recruitment for further enquiry. He has not yet received any replies showing that enticement has taken place. I did not observe a single case in which the woman showed unwillingness to go, and under these circumstances it would not have been proper to detain them. Sometimes it is very difficult to get the women to answer questions. They often talk dialects which are not understood.* One woman could not be made to answer questions intelligently, and was ordered to be returned. But, taken as a whole, I do not think it at all doubtful that the women I saw at Dhubri during these four days knew what they were doing, and did it of their own free will."

In the course of his recent cold-weather tour, the Chief Commissioner took occasion to see for himself how the work was done, and he found the procedure to be as above described. There seemed to him, indeed, only two particulars in which it could, under existing conditions, be improved, or on which any orders from him were called for. One was that the "Catechism" described in the 6th paragraph of Mr. Godfrey's letter cited above should, it seemed to him, be gone through with batches of coolies not exceeding 6 or 7, instead of with the whole body *en masse*, which, in his opinion, reduced it to little better than an empty form. The other was that the work of reading out of the lists and presenting of the coolies individually to the Deputy-Commissioner for examination, and for signature of the contracts, as described in paragraph 7 of Mr. Godfrey's letter, which latter is the most important part of the procedure, should not be done, as it then was, by the depôt servants, but by the Deputy-Commissioner's own clerks, the depôt servants merely standing by to render assistance when necessary.

16. Now, as to the possibility of malpractices under this system, it is perfectly obvious that anything in the way of the use of force to compel a coolie to embark against his will is absolutely out of the question. It may, indeed, be added that anything in the way of force to compel a coolie to remain in the depôt is likewise out of the question, for the depôts are very open places, daily visited by European officers of Government, who might at any moment walk over every portion of them.

Next, as regards intimidation, no one who has seen cases in which grown men have, under the influence of intimidation, come up in court and confessed in detail to atrocious crimes which they had never committed, will be so bold as to assert that in no case could an immigrant at Dhubri be intimidated into declaring himself willing to contract and executing the contract; but the Chief Commissioner does not believe that, except in extremely rare cases, anything of the sort would be attempted there. The danger of a person whose consent to a transaction has been obtained by intimidation suddenly taking courage and receding from it when he finds himself in the presence of a European officer is always great; men like Mr. Saubolle and Mr. Logan, and even the agent of Hiralall Mukerji, who is a native, know too well what the result of anything of that sort being discovered in their depôts would be to allow it to go on, and it would be impossible for it to go on to any extent worth speaking of without their knowing it. As for the suggestion that large batches of coolies, even if originally they were forcibly seized in Bengal, could be kept under such a system of terrorism at Dhubri that they would be frightened into executing contracts, the Chief Commissioner has already expressed his opinion of it.

17. Misrepresentation, it must be admitted, stands on a very different footing. This matter was discussed very fully in paragraph 3 of the last report, and Mr. Fitzpatrick sees no reason, on further experience of the system, to modify in any material respect the opinions he then expressed. It is enough to say here that the immense mass of the immigrants who belong to the regular immigrating classes know perfectly well what is before them, and are accordingly not liable to be deceived; but that there are some others differently situated, who may be, and doubtless are at times, induced to emigrate and enter into contracts at Dhubri by misrepresentations, which may vary from a mere overstatement of the advantages of the emigrant's life such as might occur under any system of emigration up to (in very rare cases) some diabolically-concocted story, which might, *e.g.*, lead an ignorant woman to believe that the life she was entering on would be something altogether different from that of a field labourer. Cases of this sort are in their nature very difficult to deal with, and the difficulty is immensely enhanced here, partly because, as explained last year, the aggrieved parties (probably at the instigation of others more foolish than themselves) persist in distorting the facts so as to make out as harrowing a

tale as possible, and partly owing to the circumstance that there is a growing tendency among immigrants, who are disappointed with the position in which they find themselves on arriving at the garden, to bring a charge of this sort, and it is thus becoming more and more difficult to be certain that one is not dealing with a case which is absolutely without foundation Then, again, besides the malpractices already referred to, there is pressure or undue influence not amounting to intimidation:—An immigrant at Dhubri is far from his home. If he does not happen to belong to a batch from the same neighbourhood, he is alone among strangers. He as a rule has no money. He probably thinks, or is led to think, that having gone so far he must go on, or he will be left to shift for himself. As a matter of fact, that is, from a strictly legal point of view, his position; and though in practice immigrants who refuse to enter into contracts at Dhubri are sent to their homes at the expense of the depôt, one can well understand that a weak and ignorant man under all the circumstances would, though anxious to recede, be easily persuaded to go on.

18. This danger, and that arising from possible misrepresentation, could be met only by requiring the immigrant to be questioned at much greater length than he is at present. This is the weak point of the present Dhubri system. Owing to the immense daily influx of immigrants with contracts to be executed, and the necessity on sanitary grounds of getting them off within 24 hours, it is impossible for the Deputy-Commissioner to devote more than about half a minute to each, and consequently his work, though well done, as far as it goes, and calculated to afford a good security against force or intimidation, is necessarily of a somewhat perfunctory character. It would be difficult to improve matters much in this respect by the appointment of a special officer; as the coolies arrive at Dhubri late in the afternoon, it is impossible to have their papers ready till the morning, and then there are many other matters to be attended to, besides the medical examination and the execution of the contracts, in order that they may be ready for embarkation by three o'clock, as they must be.

19. It will be seen from the foregoing remarks that the Chief Commissioner regards the evils of Dhubri as much less serious than they are sometimes represented to be; but if, such as they are, we desire to remedy them, the proper way, in his opinion, to set about it is to require all contracts to be executed in the immediate neighbourhood of the place of recruitment, and to arrange that the officer before whom they are executed should have only such a number to deal with that he could go fully into the circumstances of every case, in which it was not clear beyond the shadow of a doubt that everything was being fairly done.

The next best thing to that, and indeed there would be little difference between the two, would be to have all emigrants, before they leave the place of recruitment, registered under Section 32 of the Act, as proposed when Mr. Nolan visited Shillong last September. Whichever plan was adopted, it would probably be necessary to make some exception in the case of immigrants brought to Assam by *bonâ fide* unlicensed sardárs under the system in vogue in the gardens of the Chargola Valley and some other gardens on the Surma side; but if this were done, there would, so far as Mr. Fitzpatrick can ascertain, be no inconvenience caused to anybody except the coolie contractors, *arkatis*, and such like.

CHAPTER II.—Labour Force.

Statistics of the labour force.

20. The following table is an abstract of the statement at the end of the report, which gives full details of the Provincial labour force, and shows roughly the additions and deductions made during the year 1888:—

Labour force remaining at the end of the year 1887 (column 2 of statement).		324,100
Additions—		
Imported by contractors or garden-sardárs, including free labourers and dependents imported direct (columns 3, 4, and 5 of statement.)	46,293	
Local labour contracts entered into under Sections 111 and 112 of Act I. of 1882 (columns 6 and 7 of statement)	18,767	
Received from other gardens (column 8 of statement)	4,877	
Deserters recaptured (column 9 of statement)	396	
Remaining after expiry of contract (column 10 of statement)	18,685	
Otherwise obtained (column 11 of statement).....	23,632	
Births (column 12 of statement)	10,127	
Total	.....	122,777
Deductions—		
Transferred to other gardens (column 16 of statement)	3,599	
Left with permission or on expiry of contract (columns 17 and 27 of statement).	54,199	
Deaths (column 18 of statement)	13,857	
Desertions (column 19 of statement)	12,284	
Free labourers put under contract (columns 21 and 22 of statement)	7,822	
Contracts cancelled under Sections 111, 140, or 177 of Act I., of 1882 (column 23 of statement)	26	
" " " " 122 (" 24 ")	400	
" " " " 129 (" 25 ")	10	
" redeemed " " 142 (" 28 ")	36	
" dissolved by mutual consent (" 29 ")	330	
Total	.....	92,563
Net increase during the year	.....	30,214
Grand total at the close of the year.....	.....	354,314

In paragraph 23 of the report for last year it was pointed out that the figures given in this abstract contain many doubtful points, and it was added that the Chief Commissioner would consider separately whether, without giving additional trouble to employers, anything could be done to make the returns clearer and less open to doubtful interpretation than they at present are. This matter is still under consideration, and, in the meantime, it would not serve any useful purpose to discuss the figures in detail. It may, however, be noted that, so far as the entry under the head "otherwise obtained" is concerned, the explanation suggested in last year's report is borne out by the district reports for 1888. The figures given under this head include (1) labourers who, either before or after expiry of their contracts, have left other gardens, either with or without authority, (2) persons who came from outside the Province, but who were not imported by contractors or sardárs, and (3) indigenous labourers recruited in the Province. In short, as was surmised to be the case, the heading is used for all labourers who do not clearly fall under any other of the prescribed headings of the statement.

As regards the precise significance of the figures, the Deputy-Commissioner of Sibságar remarks:—

"From the misleading nature of the tables, it has generally been considered that large numbers of coolies leave the Province. I am sure they do not."

As regards coolies who have left the gardens, Mr. Knox Wight adds—

"But the o have not gone home. They have either taken up land somewhere, or work as sub-tenants, or have taken domestic service, or have taken up petty trading, cartman's business, &c., &c. Thus, I doubt whether the gardens lose more than one per cent. of the labour force. * * * From the above it i perfectly clear to me that coolies when they once come here do not return home except in very rare cases."

On the same point Mr. Stevenson, Deputy-Commissioner of Sylhet, observes—

"It is difficult to say what becomes of the majority of immigrants. There is a pretty general consensus of opinion amongst planters that comparatively few finally return to their country, but where those go who do not stay in the tea districts is uncertain. Many, no doubt, find their way to jute mills, but most remain on gardens. Old and feeble coolies rarely return to their country. They very probably have lost touch with friends and relatives there, and prefer to end their days on the garden. They can generally earn something by doing light work of some sort or another, such as can always be had on a tea-garden, so that they are not entirely burdens upon their friends. Some few get adrift and land eventually in our dispensaries as vagrants."

The above remarks have been inserted, as they have an important bearing on some of the figures here given, and there is, doubtless, much truth in them, but the Chief Commissioner is not prepared to express any definite opinion pending the results of further enquiry* which is being made into the matter.

* See paragraph 26 of Circular No 43, dated 30th May 1889, at page X. of Appendix A, attached to the report

Mean strength of the labour force

21. The statement below shows the total labour force at the beginning and end of each of the last three years, and also the mean strength for the two half-years of 1888 :—

Class of labourers.	1st January 1886.	1st January 1887.	1st January 1888.	1st July 1888.	Mean strength for the first half-year of 1888.	31st December 1888.	Mean strength for the second half-year of 1888.
Act adults	82,183	77,476	81,701	89,187	85,444	88,380	88,783
Non-Act ... Adults	102,563	111,022	122,556	137,274	129,915	133,888	135,581
Non-Act ... Children	104,337	112,660	119,843	129,075	124,459	132,046	130,560
Total	289,083	301,158	324,100	355,536	339,818	354,314	354,925

District figures of the labour force

22. The details of each district are given in the table below :—

District.	1st January 1888.	31st December 1888.	Percentage of total provincial force.	Increase or decrease.	Percentage of increase or decrease.
Cachar	88,522	93,434	26·4	+ 4,912	+ 5·5
Sylhet	60,946	68,252	19·3	+ 7,306	+ 11·9
Total of Surma Valley	149,468	161,686	45·6	+ 12,218	+ 8·1
Kámrúp	2,760	2,798	0·8	+ 38	+ 1·3
Darrang	31,794	36,818	10·4	+ 5,024	+ 15·8
Nowgong	12,250	13,382	3·8	+ 1,132	+ 9·2
Sibságar	73,545	80,068	22·5	+ 6,523	+ 8·8
Lakhimpur	54,283	59,562	16·8	+ 5,279	+ 9·7
Total of Assam Valley	174,632	192,628	54·4	+ 17,996	+ 10·3
Grand Total	324,100	354,314	100·0	+ 30,214	+ 9·3

23. The following statement shows the nationality and the sex of the adult labour force at the beginning and end of 1888 :—

Nationality of the adult labour force

Nationality.	Sex.	Act. 1887.	Act. 1888.	Non-Act 1887.	Non-Act 1888.	Total. 1887.	Total. 1888.	Ratio of nationality.
Bengal	Men ...	9,293	9,102	17,265	18,074	26,558	27,176	23·9
	Women	8,608	8,545	16,501	17,488	25,109	26,033	
North-Western Provinces, Oudh, and Behar.	Men ...	7,963	7,744	15,689	17,900	23,652	25,644	20·9
	Women	5,445	5,494	13,715	15,386	19,160	20,880	
Chota Nagpur	Men ...	26,043	29,624	25,944	28,192	51,987	57,816	48·4
	Women	21,113	24,240	23,030	25,421	44,143	49,661	
Nepal	Men ...	40	33	110	125	150	158	0·1
	Women	8	11	91	91	99	102	
Madras	Men ...	178	262	623	649	801	911	0·8
	Women	143	192	551	575	694	767	
Bombay	Men ...	7	7	106	131	113	138	0·1
	Women	4	6	121	138	125	144	
Assam	Men ...	2,110	2,332	7,253	8,034	9,363	10,366	5·8
	Women	746	788	1,557	1,684	2,303	2,472	
Total	Men ...	45,634	49,104	66,990	73,105	112,624	122,209	...
	Women	36,067	39,276	55,566	60,783	91,633	100,059	...
Grand Total ...	.....	81,701	88,380	122,556	133,888	204,257	222,268	...

N B.—The differences between the entries in columns 3, 5, and 7, and those in the corresponding columns of the statement embodied in paragraph 26 of the Report for 1887 are due to causes explained at foot of the statement at the end of this report.

The proportion of Act, non-Act, and all coolies belonging to each nationality is shown separately thus:—

	1887. Total.	1888. Act labourers.	1888. Non-Act labourers.	1888. Total.
Bengal	25·4	19·96	26·56	23·9
North-Western Provinces, Oudh, and Behar.	21·0	14·96	24·86	20·9
Chota Nagpur	47·0	60·99	40·04	48·4
Nepal	0·1	0·04	0·16	0·1
Madras	0·7	0·51	0·92	0·8
Bombay	0 1	0·01	0·20	0·1
Assam	5·7	3·53	7·26	5 8
Total	100·	100·	100·	100·

24. The mean strength in each district for each half-year and for the whole year is shown below. On these figures the half-yearly and annual percentages of desertions and mortality are calculated:—

Mean strength in each district.

District.	Act. First half-year.	Act. Second half-year.	Act. Annual mean.	Non-Act. Adults. First half-year.	Non-Act. Adults. Second half-year.	Non-Act. Adults. Annual mean.	Non-Act. Children. First half-year.	Non-Act. Children. Second half-year.	Non-Act. Children. Annual mean.	Total annual strength. First half-year.	Total annual strength. Second half-year.	Total annual strength. Annual mean.
Cachar ...	10,770	10,923	10,846	39,498	40,947	40,222	40,225	41,079	40,652	90,494	92,950	91,722
Sylhet ...	8,960	8,868	8,914	32,786	34,961	33,873	22,513	24,083	23,298	64,259	67,912	66,086
Kámrúp ...	477	491	484	1,381	1,319	1,350	957	1,023	990	2,815	2,834	2,825
Darrang ...	13,368	14,630	13,999	11,793	12,263	12,028	9,375	10,155	9,765	34,537	37,049	35,793
Nowgong .	1,897	2,102	1,999	6,798	7,006	6,902	4,349	4,501	4,425	13,044	13,610	13,327
Sibsagar ...	29,678	30,418	30,048	19,677	20,676	20,176	27,850	29,373	28,612	77,206	80,468	78,837
Lakhimpur	20,291	21,348	20,819	17,980	18,408	18,194	19,189	20,344	19,766	57,461	60,100	58,780
Total ...	85,444	88,783	87,113	129,915	135,581	132,748	124,459	130,560	127,509	339,818	354,925	347,371

General remarks regarding labour force.

25. The statistics given in the last four paragraphs do not call for any detailed remarks, but, as regards the proportion which the strength of the labour force generally bears to the area of the land under cultivation, the Chief Commissioner would observe that the matter appears to possess greater importance than has perhaps hitherto been held to attach to it. On this point, Mr. Stevenson, Deputy-Commissioner of Sylhet, writes—

"Planters are beginning to find that it pays better in the long run to have more coolies on the garden than are required to work all at the same time. This permits coolies to have off days to themselves every now and then, time which they much appreciate, and is often utilized in working at patches of cultivation for their own benefit. Coolies are never so contented when the necessities of the garden require them to be regularly at work, and the constant 'driving' is found very trying by the manager himself."

Not only does a full supply of labour tend to make the coolies more contented as stated in this extract, but it also saves them from overpressure, which, though the tasks are usually light, must at times, when a labourer is somewhat ailing, be detrimental to his health, and tend to lower the garden in the scale of healthiness. The number of coolies to each acre of land under cultivation varies immensely from the wealthy and well-managed gardens, where there is a full labour supply, to the inferior gardens, where it may be doubted whether the labour supply is always sufficient. This matter appears to the Chief Commissioner to be of sufficient importance to require that it should be separately and fully noticed in all inspection reports, and a circular has accordingly been issued with a view to ensure this being in future done. The matter has also been prominently* noticed in the circular recently issued by the Chief Commissioner regarding the general working of Act I. of 1882.

* *See* paragraphs 55-58 of Circular No. 43, dated the 30th May 1880, at pages xv. and xvi. of Appendix A attached to this report.

CHAPTER III.—CONTRACTS AND WAGES.

Number of contracts made.

26. The number of contracts executed without the intervention of the Inspector under Section 111 of the Act fell from 19,457 in the previous year to 18,209, or by 6·4 per cent. The number of contracts executed before the Inspector or Magistrate under Section 112 decreased from 987 to 558 In addition to the above, 16,544 contracts were executed at Dhubri under Section 111, against 15,447 in the previous year, and 5,939* contracts were entered into in the districts of recruitment, against 5,355* in 1887. Thus the total number of contracts executed during the year under report (1) by emigrants in the districts of recruitment or at Dhubri, and (2) by immigrants, time-expired labourers, or labourers locally procured in the labour districts more properly so-called, was 41,250, against 41,246 during the preceding year.

* Exclusive of dependents.

It should be remembered that these figures by no means represent the entire number of labourers who executed contracts during the year, inasmuch as they do not include contracts entered into under Act XIII. of 1859. Contracts under this Act are freely made use of in many places, but details are not known, as they are executed without the intervention of any official, and no information respecting them is supplied by the employers of labour. The Deputy-Commissioner of Lakhimpur expresses an opinion that contracts under Section 111 of Act I. of 1882 are taking the place of contracts under Act XIII. of 1859; but the Chief Commissioner has found that elsewhere the reverse is the case.

Nationality of labourers making local contracts

27. The following table shows the sex and nationality of labourers who entered into local contracts district by district :—

District.	Sex.	Contracted under Section 111.	Contracted under Section 112.	Particulars of columns 3 and 4 by nationality. North-Western Provinces, Oudh and Behar.	Bengal.	Chota Nagpur.	Nepal.	Madras.	Bombay.	Assam.	Total of columns 3 and 4.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Cachar	Men	1,610	62	580	763	301	1	9	...	18	1,672
	Women	1,152	46	464	500	216	1	14	...	3	1,198
	Total of 1888	2,762	108	1,044	1,263	517	2	23	...	21	2,870
	" " 1887	2,629	196	1,009	1,231	544	2	30	1	8	2,825
Sylhet	Men	1,962	24	549	791	596	3	47	...	...	1,986
	Women	1,426	45	544	412	484	...	31	...	...	1,471
	Total of 1888	3,388	69	1,093	1,203	1,080	3	78	...	...	3,457
	" " 1887	2,640	3	693	890	980	3	72	...	5	2,643
Kámrúp	Men	19	12	...	...	20	...	...	...	11	31
	Women	10	6	...	...	10	...	...	...	6	16
	Total of 1888	29	18	...	...	30	...	...	...	17	47
	" " 1887	22	13	2	...	22	...	...	...	11	35
Darrang	Men	1,746	65	249	105	737	...	2	...	718	1,811
	Women	823	21	197	51	383	...	1	...	212	844
	Total of 1888	2,569	86	446	156	1,120	..	3	...	930	2,655
	" " 1887	2,741	379	731	358	1,123	23	2	...	883	3,120
Nowgong	Men	75	.....	...	...	66	...	...	...	9	75
	Women	22	... .	...	...	18	...	...	...	4	22
	Total of 1888	97	.....	...	...	84	...	...	...	13	97
	" " 1887	123	8	14	11	106	...	...	...	...	131
Sibságar	Men	4,553	107	796	616	2,290	6	26	4	922	4,660
	Women	3,052	43	632	464	1,810	2	15	2	170	3,095
	Total of 1888	7,605	150	1,428	1,080	4,100	8	41	6	1,092	7,755
	" " 1887	9,768	117	1,894	1,671	5,112	13	23	4	1,168	9,885
Lakhimpur	Men	1,108	86	260	32	844	...	15	...	43	1,194
	Women	651	41	190	14	473	...	15	...	...	692
	Total of 1888	1,759	127	450	46	1,317	...	30	...	43	1,886
	" " 1887	1,534	271	249	35	1,447	...	2	...	72	1,805
	Grand Total of 1888	18,209	558	4,461	3,748	8,248	13	175	6	2,116	18,767
	" " 1887	19,457	987	4,592	4,196	9,334	41	129	5	2,117	20,444

† These labourers are not shown in the statement in paragraph 23 showing the labour force at the beginning and end of the year 1888, the reason being that although they entered into agreements before the end of 1887, their agreements, which were for one year, were not registered till January 1888 They were consequently not shown in the registers of the Deputy-Commissioner at the opening of the year, and were omitted by the manager from their half yearly returns for the second half-year of 1887, and as the time expired before the 31st December 1888, they were not shown at the end of the year

These figures do not call for any remark. As was explained last year, many Kacháris are employed in the Darrang district under the Act, and in Sibságar the Assamese coolies employed are, almost without exception, Kacháris from Darrang and Kámrúp. In his present report the Deputy-Commissioner of Darrang observes that the tendency in that district is to rely to an increasing extent on Kachári labour.

Details of local contracts.

28. The following table shows the details of local contracts, exclusive of those executed at Dhubri, and the classes of labourers who entered into them, and the term of the contracts:—

District	Section 111.	Section 112.	Class of labourers.				Number of years.							
			New.	Time-expired.	Old Act coolies transferred.	Local.	Under one year.	1	2	Under two and half years.	3	4	Under five years.	5
Cachar	2,762	108	1,880	969	...	21	...	413	352	5	1,952	...	25	123
Sylhet	3,388	69	2,782	675	...	...	...	667	81	...	2,702	...	...	7
Kámrup	29	18	14	16	...	17	...	12	2	...	9	1	...	23
Darrang	2,569	86	63	1,662	...	930	142	1,178	524	...	484	23	...	304
Nowgong	97	...	33	24	40	...	11	56	15	...	9	3	...	3
Sibságar	7,452	150	883	5,583	...	1,136	91	3,424	2,156	...	1,750	115	...	66
Lakhimpur	1,759	127	...	1,843	...	43	...	1,274	102	...	365	16	..	129
Total	18,056*	558	5,655	10,772	40	2,147	244	7,024	3,232	5	7,271	158	25	655
Total for 1887	19,457	987	6,138	12,163	...	2,143	61	9,103	3,934	6,661		99		586

* The difference between this entry and that in column 3 of the table in paragraph 27, showing nationality of labourers making local contracts and in column 6 of the statement at the end of the report, is in the case of Sibságar, and is attributed to the fact that 163 contracts, probably executed in December, were not sent in for registration till the following month.

The decrease which took place in contracts under Section 111 was confined to the Assam Valley and to the districts of Darrang (from 2,741 to 2,569 contracts), Nowgong (from 123 to 97 contracts), and Sibságar (from 9,768 to 7,452 contracts). It will thus be seen that the decrease was most marked in the Sibságar district, and the Deputy-Commissioner attributes it to the fact that the number of contracts executed under Section 111 in the previous year was abnormally large. In the Surma Valley districts a slight increase took place in Cachar (from 2,629 to 2,762 contracts), and a very considerable increase in Sylhet (from 2,640 to 3,388 contracts). The Deputy-Commissioner of Sylhet attributes the increase to the larger number of free immigrants who were imported, and who were placed under Act-I. contracts on arrival at the gardens, in accordance with instructions said to have been received by the managers from the Calcutta agents.

As regards the duration of contracts generally, the Deputy-Commissioner of Cachar remarks that—

"Very few contracts are now entered into for more than three years, and no time-expired coolies ever give contracts for more than one year."

Similarly, the Deputy-Commissioner of Sylhet writes:—

"Time-expired coolies rarely re-engage for more than one year under Act I., and with no class are contracts for ever three years in favour."

In paragraph 21 of last year's report, reference was made to the very considerable differences between the percentage of contracts for terms exceeding three years in the case of (1) contracts entered into in the recruiting districts for the Assam Valley, (2) contracts entered into at Dhubri, and (3) contracts entered into in the labour districts, properly so-called, and it was pointed out that the very large percentage of the Dhubri

contracts which are entered into for five years calls for explanation. The following figures embody a comparison of the results during the past two years:—

	Proportion of contracts for three years and upwards, but less than five years, to total number of Act-I. contracts.		Proportion of contracts for five years to total number of Act-I. contracts.		Proportion of contracts for three years and upwards to total number of Act-I. contracts (aggregate of preceding columns).	
	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.
(a) In the recruiting districts for the Surma Valley.*	100·	.....	.....	.....	100	.....
(b) In the recruiting districts for the Assam Valley.	55·3	64·0	44·7	36·0	100	100
(c) At Dhubri for the Assam Valley.	3·7	1·7	96·3	98·3	100	100
(d) In the labour districts of the Surma Valley.	61·7	73·9	1·4	2·0	63·1	75·9
(e) In the labour districts of the Assam Valley.	22·6	22 6	3·3	4·2	25·9	26·8

* Information for 1888 not available. The figures for 1887 are taken from the Inland Emigration Report of Bengal for 1887, and relate to contractors' coolies only

The noteworthy points brought out by the above figures are (1) the great preponderance of five-year contracts in the case of labourers put under contract at Dhubri; (2) the similar preponderance of contracts for periods varying from three to five years, in the case of labourers put under contract in the labour districts of the Surma Valley, as compared with those of the Assam Valley; and (3) the small proportion of the contracts for five years executed on the gardens both in the Surma Valley and in the Assam Valley.

As regards the first of these points, that is, the prevalence of five-year contracts at Dhubri, Mr. A. C. Campbell, the Officiating Commissioner of the Assam Valley Districts, writes—

"I can only repeat my assurance that it is not owing to any pressure being brought to bear on the emigrants. As far as my enquiries extend, employers select the route, as it is the easiest and shortest into the Province, and that by which they have been accustomed to introduce their labour in previous years. There are, of course, fewer five-year agreements registered in Bengal, but it should also be considered that very few agreements are registered in Bengal."

The Chief Commissioner has already, in a previous portion of this report, given his opinion as to the extent to which it would be possible for pressure or undue influence to be used at Dhubri, and he would state here that he does not believe that the large preponderance of five-year contracts executed there is to any considerable extent due to it. There may, of course, be individual cases where pressure is used at Dhubri by the depôt managers and other private persons interested. When we find a certain proportion of the coolies refusing at the last moment to execute a five-year contract, and when, as one of the depôt managers informed the Chief Commissioner, money has sometimes to be paid to them at Dhubri to induce them to agree to a five-year term, it is only reasonable to suppose that in other cases pressure of some sort would be employed to effect the same object, but it is impossible to suppose that, under the conditions which exist at Dhubri, pressure could be applied to such an extent, or in such a degree, as to account for the result before us. The explanation of this result must, accordingly, be sought for in some other direction. When Mr. Fitzpatrick was recently at Dhubri, he was told that the explanation was that those who obtained coolies *viâ* Dhubri insisted on five-year agreements, that it was made a proviso in the orders received by the depôt managers that the agreement should be for five years, in other words, that it was not, as has been suggested, that coolies entered into five-year agreements because they came to Dhubri, but

that they came to Dhubri because they were willing to enter into five-year agreements, and, as the Chief Commissioner understands, this is the explanation offered by the Officiating Commissioner, who writes—

"The preponderance of five-years' agreements executed at Dhubri is simply owing to the fact that labourers who have verbally agreed to serve for five years are introduced into the Province by the safer and more expeditious route by Dhubri."

It seems not an unreasonable explanation, because we know that importance is attached in the Assam Valley to having the agreement for five years, and, that being so, it is only reasonable to suppose that those who bring down the coolies would, as a rule, select only such as would be really willing to engage for five years. They might occasionally, supposing it to be possible to exercise pressure at Dhubri, bring down doubtful coolies in the hope of extorting five-year agreements from them there, but they would hardly run the risk of bringing down any large proportion of the immense number of coolies who engage for five years without making sure of their willingness before starting them. This explanation, however, cannot be accepted as satisfactory until we are told why managers in the Assam Valley insist on five-year contracts, while managers in the Surma Valley are satisfied with three-year contracts, and still more why managers in the Assam Valley are in the majority of cases satisfied with getting a three-year contract from a coolie who contracts in the recruiting districts, while they always insist on having a five-year contract from the coolie who contracts at Dhubri. On the whole, the Chief Commissioner thinks that it would be well to reserve an opinion on the point until the replies to the general Circular* which has been recently issued for the purpose of inquiring into the working of Act I. of 1882, and in which this particular point has been prominently noticed, are received.

* See paragraphs 29 and 30 of Circular No 47 dated the 30th May 1889 at page XI, Appendix A attached to this report.

If, however, it be true that the same preference for five-year contracts which exists in the Assam Valley does not exist in the Surma Valley, it is also true that, taking the contracts executed on the gardens in the two valleys, the proportion of contracts for periods between three and five years to the total number of contracts executed on gardens is far larger in the Surma Valley than in the Assam Valley, and the reason for this result is sufficiently obvious. In the Assam Valley the very large majority of coolies come *viâ* Dhubri, and are put under contract there; whereas in the case of the Surma Valley the large majority do not come up under the Act, and are not put under contract, where resort is had to contracts at all, until arrival at their gardens. The three-year contracts executed on the gardens in the Surma Valley, in short, take the place of the Dhubri contracts in the Assam Valley. Renewals of contracts, which form the great bulk of the contracts executed on the gardens in the Assam Valley, are rarely effected for a term longer than one year.

Verification of contracts.

29. The following table shows the particulars regarding verification and cancelment of the contracts executed under Section 111:—

1	2				3	4	5	6
District	Number and year of contracts under Section 111 (excluding those executed at Dhubri) remaining unverified at beginning of year under report				Number of contracts executed during the year under Section 111.	Total of columns 2 and 3	Number of such contracts executed after the last inspection, where the garden has been inspected during the year under report.	Total number of contracts for verification (column 4 column 5).
	1885	1886	1887.	Total.				
Cachar	105	362	1,521	1,988	2,762	4,750	1,095	3,655
Sylhet	.....	.....	582	582	3,388	3,970	723	3,247
Kamrup	.....	.....	10	10	29	39	2	37
Darrang	.....	244	475	719	2,569	3,288	675	2,613
Nowgong	.....	.....	4	4	97	101	19	82
Sibsagar	.....	.....	3,852	3,852	7,452	11,304	1,453	9,851
Lakhimpur	.....	105	428	533	1,759	2,292	164	2,128
Total	105	711	6,872	7,688	18,056*	25,744	4,131	21,613

* See explanation at foot of statement showing details of local contracts.

District.	7										8	9	10
	Number and year of contracts										Total (of totals under column 7).	Percentage of all contracts verified or cancelled (total of column 8 on total of column 6).	Percentage of contracts of year under report verified or cancelled (total of sub-columns for year under report in column 7 on total of column 3—column 5).
	(a) Verified.					(b) Cancelled							
	1885.	1886.	1887	1888.	Total	1885.	1886.	1887.	1888.	Total.			
Cachar	83	211	869	980	2,143	4	...	1	35	40	2,183	59 7	60 8
Sylhet	...	...	340	2,139	2,479	...	...	3	17	20	2,499	76 9	80 9
Kámrúp	...	...	3	26	29	...	...	...	...	.....	29	78.3	96·2
Darrang	...	213	416	1,801	2,430	...	...	...	...	.....	2,430	92 9	95 0
Nowgong ...	...	...	1	67	68	...	...	3	1	4	72	87·8	87 1
Sibságar ...	...	...	2,541	5,220	7,761	...	...	117	...	117	7 878	79 9	87 0
Lakhimpur ..	...	...	334	1,223	1,557	.	...	...	...	.....	1,557	73 1	76 6
Total ...	83	424	4,504	11,456	16,467	4	...	124	53	181	16,648	77 2	82 6

The Chief Commissioner is far from satisfied from the figures given in the last two columns of the above statement that the important work of verifying contracts is in all cases adequately performed. In explanation of the low percentages of contracts actually verified to contracts for verification, it is urged in some of the district reports that deductions on various accounts must be made from the contracts for verification, or that additions on these accounts must be made to the number of contracts verified. Thus, it is said that allowance must be made by one or other of these methods for labourers whose contracts need verification, but who are at the time of inspection absent from the garden on leave or on duty such as recruiting, or who are ill, or who have died or absconded. Similarly, in the case of gardens which have been left uninspected for more than a year, contracts may have expired before the Inspector's visit, or, in other cases, the period of many of the contracts for verification may be so near to expiry as to render it unnecessary to verify them. Now, the Chief Commissioner fully recognises that allowances must be made in such cases as those mentioned, but at the same time it is necessary that the deductions to be made on each of the above or on other accounts should in all cases be fully explained by the inspecting officer, and that he should not content himself with merely entering all such cases in a lump as cases of labourers " not produced." In the absence of such explanations the inspecting officers concerned must be held responsible. In explanation of the extremely low percentage of contracts verified to the number for verification during the year under report in Cachar, the Deputy-Commissioner states that in numerous cases contracts sent on for registration under Section 111 of the Act had not been received back in the garden at the time of the Inspector's visit, the fault lying with the garden agents at the head-quarters station. Assuming the facts to be as stated, the Chief Commissioner can scarcely believe that the defect could not be easily remedied if an effort were made to do so, the attention of managers being drawn to the matter, but it is open to doubt whether the explanation is sufficient to account for the result shown. As regards the low percentage in the case of Lakhimpur, the Deputy-Commissioner offers no special explanation beyond attributing it to the operation of the general causes above referred to, coupled with an inadequate performance of this duty on the part of Dr. Whitwell, the late Civil Surgeon of the district The Chief Commissioner is glad to notice that the number of contracts verified (excluding those cancelled) advanced in the Province as a whole from 12,509 in the previous year to 16,467 during the year under report, and that this increase was common to all districts (except Nowgong), having been especially marked in Sylhet, where the number of contracts verified advanced from 1,795 to 2,499, Sibságar, where it increased from 5,916 to 7,878, and in Lakhimpur, where it advanced from 651 to 1,557. It may, therefore, fairly be said that a more or less considerable advance has been made, but at the same time the figures, even after allowance is made for coolies not produced for sufficiently good reasons, show that far too much room for improvement still exists in many districts, and the Chief Commissioner trusts that, instead of relaxing their efforts, all district officers will, on the contrary, increase them, with a view to carry out as fully as is practicable the intentions of the law in this matter, the importance of which can scarcely be exaggerated.

As regards the form of the above table, which has been devised in order to supply further particulars as to the verification of contracts than were previously shown, Mr. A. C. Campbell, Officiating Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts, remarks:—

"I think it would be desirable if the verification table was altered so as to show what term contracts were verified. Long-term contracts should have priority of verification, and the gardens in which most contracts of this class are executed should be inspected first. One year contracts are not of so much importance, as a considerable portion of the term expires before verification can be effected."

There is no doubt much truth in these remarks, but, as regards the order in which gardens should be inspected, the Chief Commissioner is not prepared to lay down that this should depend, exclusively or even mainly, on the number of long-term contracts which require verification, inasmuch as many other matters of more or less importance have to be considered in connection with this point.

Expiry and cancelment of contracts.

30. The following table shows the number of contracts which expired by lapse of time, the number of such contracts reported by managers as required by Section 141 of the Act, and the number of contracts which terminated in other ways:—

District	Number shown in garden returns as time-expired.	Number of time expired contracts reported under Section 141.	Number cancelled by Inspector under Section 111	Number suspended by Inspector for temporary unfitness, Section 120	Number cancelled by Inspector for permanent incapacity, Section 122	Number made void by committee by reason of unfitness of estate, Section 129	Number cancelled by magistrate under Section 140	Number redeemed under Section 142	Number dissolved by mutual consent
Cachar	3,649	3,512	19	.....	20	10	.....	2	30
Sylhet	3,325	3,298	1	.....	19	.....	.....	.....	12
Kámrúp	123	119	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Darrang	2,851	1,846	.....	.....	66	.....	4	1	32
Nowgong	448	448	.....	.....	26	.....	.....	11	14
Sibságar	10,431	7,032	.....	.....	91	.....	.....	6	20
Lakhimpur	4,047	3,521	.....	.....	178	.....	2	16	222
Total of 1888	24,874	19,776	20	.....	400	10	6	36	330
Total of 1887	28,245	18,113	5	.....	690*	14	1	40	236

* 6 cancelled at depôt, *viz.* 5 in Sylhet and 1 in Cachar

As in previous years, Nowgong is the only district in which the requirements of the law in the matter of reporting the expiry of contracts are fully complied with by employers. In Sylhet and Kámrúp, however, the general results were satisfactory, and in Cachar there was considerable improvement as compared with the previous year. In Sibságar and Lakhimpur there was also marked improvement, but in both these cases there is still very great default on the part of managers, which the Deputy-Commissioners will doubtless do all in their power to remedy. In Darrang the results continue to be very unsatisfactory, and, managers having been duly warned, more stringent measures must now be resorted to.

Of the 20 contracts cancelled during 1888 by the Inspector under Section 111 of Act I. of 1882, 19 were cancelled in Cachar, and related to a batch of coolies imported for the Khaspur garden. The story told by these coolies was that they were proceeding in a body to a garden in the Duárs, where they had arranged to work, when they were forcibly kidnapped by some recruiters, and somehow or other packed off to Cachar. Their headman escaped and complained to the police, and within two months of their arrival at the Khaspur garden, a copy of the complaint reached Cachar from Hazaribagh, and the Deputy-Commissioner at once took action, with the result that all the contracts of those of the batch who had not absconded from the garden were cancelled, and the coolies were sent to their homes at the expense of the Local Government.

No contracts were formally suspended by Inspectors under Section 120 on account of the temporary unfitness of labourers; but, as was observed in paragraph 9 of last year's report, inspecting officers are bound to see that sick coolies receive subsistence allowance, and in practice sick diet is given to coolies in hospital without any formal order by the Inspector.

The number of contracts cancelled under Section 122, that is, owing to the permanent physical unfitness of the labourer, has fallen considerably, the decrease having been mainly due to the fact that the number of contracts thus cancelled in Lakhimpur fell from 500 in the previous year to 178 in the year under report. On this point the Deputy-Commissioner writes:—

"The reason for this large decrease is that I have been more strict in the cancelment of such contracts. I have refused to cancel contracts under Section 122 if a labourer was not really unfit permanently for work. I have refused to cancel the contracts of moribund labourers where the only object is to lower the death-rate of the garden, and I have always insisted on the employer giving me three months' wages in full, and also any arrears of pay due to the labourer up to the date of the cancelment."

In the case of Darrang, where the number of contracts cancelled under Section 122 increased from 30 in the previous year to 66, the Deputy-Commissioner explains that this was due to the importation of batches of poor physique, the contracts having been cancelled after examination of the labourers by the Civil Surgeon. In connection with this matter it was observed in paragraph 9 of last year's report, that, so long as use is not made of the power conferred by law (Section 70 of Act I. of 1882) of providing for the medical examination of intending immigrants in the district of recruitment, the responsibility for the consequences must devolve upon the managers of the gardens concerned. The Chief Commissioner is glad to observe from the present reports that more extensive use has been made of this section in some districts. Thus, in Nowgong, out of 199 certificates granted to sardárs, 123 provided for the medical examination of intending emigrants in the district of recruitment, against 47 out of 155 certificates granted in the previous year. Similarly, in Sibságar 454 out of 923 certificates (against 291 out of 874 certificates in the previous year), and in Lakhimpur 132 certificates out of 400 (against 92 out of 542 in 1887) provided for medical inspection. In the districts of Sylhet, Darrang, and Kámrúp no use is said to be made of Section 70 of the Act, and the Deputy-Commissioner of Sylhet thus explains the matter, so far as that district is concerned :—

"The answer usually given if one asks the reason of this is that in these days of great competition for labour, it would be dangerous to expose recruits to the risk of being enticed away which they would incur if taken to a centre for medical inspection."

The contracts cancelled in Cachar in consequence of the unfitness of the estate relate to the Nagadum garden, and were cancelled by order of a committee convened during the year under Section 128 of the Act.

The contracts (four in Darrang and two in Lakhimpur) cancelled under Section 140 on account of ill usage related to certain coolies whose cases will be more fully noticed in a later paragraph of this report (*see* paragraph 61).

The number of contracts redeemed under Section 142 of the Act closely corresponds with the number for 1887. As pointed out in last year's report, it is only in a few cases that coolies can raise the sum required for this purpose, and redemptions of long-term agreements are very rare. It is unnecessary to notice the point further, as separate enquiry* is being made in regard to it.

* See paragraph 36 (1) of Circular No 43, dated the 30th May 1889, page xii. of Appendix A, attached to this report

There has been a further considerable increase in the number of contracts dissolved "by mutual consent." In paragraph 9 of last year's report it was said that in most cases this arrangement is effected without the cognizance of the Inspector, who only knows of it on seeing the labourers struck off the strength in the half-yearly returns. The present district reports show that this remark is not altogether correct. The Deputy-Commissioner of Sibságar reports that such was the practice in that district, but that he now insists upon the coolie concerned being brought before an Inspector in such cases, so that it may be ascertained whether or not he is really willing to have his contract cancelled. Mr. Knox Wight adds that he considers this procedure to be necessary in the interests of the coolie. Similarly, Mr. Driberg, Deputy-Commissioner of Lakhimpur, explains that all contracts cancelled by mutual consent are cancelled by him, and that he is careful to obtain in the case of those coolies who desire to return to their homes three months' wages with all arrears of pay due. On the other hand, the Deputy-Commissioner of Darrang reports that contracts are cancelled in that district by mutual consent without the cognizance of the Inspector. This matter will be further considered by the Chief Commissioner on receipt of replies to Circular No. 43, dated 30th May 1889, in which special enquiry* has been made in regard to it. It is only necessary to remark here that cancelment of contracts by mutual consent, though assumed to be permissible in the endorsement on the form of contract in the Schedule to Act I. of 1882, is not expressly provided for by that Act.

* See paragraph 36 (3) of Circular at page xii of Appendix A to this report.

31. It may not be out of place to notice here the results of an enquiry made during the year under report, regarding the extent to which the second paragraph of Section 121 of Act I. of 1882 is acted upon in the several districts of the Province. The section in question provides that, if any labourer is compelled to absent himself from work on account of sickness, he shall receive from his employer for each day of such absence subsistence allowance of one anna and a half, or, if in hospital, sick diet on a scale to be approved by the Inspector. The second paragraph of the section goes on to prescribe that—

Extent to which the second paragraph of Section 121 of Act I. of 1882 is acted upon

"If such absence exceeds the total number of thirty days in any one year, and the employer, as soon as such number is exceeded, gives the labourer a notice in writing to that effect, each day of absence in excess of such number shall be added to the term of the labour contract, unless the labourer refunds to the employer the sum of one anna and a half for each day so in excess. The Inspector shall, from time to time, when visiting the estate, endorse on the labourer's labour-contract, after such enquiry as may be necessary, the number of days so added to the term thereof."

From the reports of Deputy-Commissioners, it appears that in not a single instance were the provisions of the paragraph quoted acted upon during the year. On this point the Deputy-Commissioner of Darrang remarks that—

"The managers are loath to worry their coolies by having days of absence arising from sickness endorsed on the labourer's contract, as it causes ill-feeling between the employer and the employed, and renders the coolie unwilling to renew his agreement."

32. Section 170 of Act I. of 1882 provides that every employer may, on or before the fifteenth day of each month, send to the Inspector a statement in writing containing the names of all or any of his labourers who voluntarily and without reasonable cause absented themselves from labour during the preceding month and specifying the periods of such absence, and that the Inspector, when next visiting the estate on which the labourers to whom such statement relates are employed, shall enquire into each such case of absence, in the presence of the labourer concerned, and, if satisfied that the labourer has voluntarily and without reasonable cause absented himself, shall, unless the labourer consents to forfeit to his employer the sum of four annas for each such day of absence, endorse such days of absence on the labour contract of such labourer, and add them to the term of such contract. In Cachar, the Deputy-Commissioner reports that the section is practically a dead letter. In Sylhet use was made of the section in the cases of three gardens only, and the Deputy-Commissioner makes the following remarks:—

Extent to which Section 170 of Act I of 1882 is acted upon

"The manager of Jaflang, in North Sylhet, is in the habit of allowing his coolies almost unlimited leave (on half *hazri*) for any good reason, *e.g.*, to look after a young child or cultivate a little *dhán* during the cold weather, they on their side agreeing to have such days added to their agreements. The names of some 200 such absentees were returned by him. In the end, however, only those who had been absent from work more than 30 or 40 days had extra time added to their agreements. These were only nine in number. They stated before the Inspector that they were ready to work off the period so added. The others the manager excused. The sub-divisional officer, Karimganj, enquired into 24 cases of absentees in the Shábázpur garden, and added a number of days to their agreements, which the coolies were quite willing to work off. The manager of Kájaldara, South Sylhet, had recourse to the section instead of prosecuting coolies for absence from work. Some of his coolies had got into the habit of malingering, so as to escape work and get hospital diet. By resorting to this section these coolies were, for a time, kept out of the bonus which is given in a renewal of agreement."

The Deputy-Commissioners of the Assam Valley districts have made no reference to the operation of this section of the law in their reports; but they will be requested to do so in future, as it is a disputed point how far the provisions of the section are useful. The matter has also been especially noticed in the general circular* issued by the Chief Commissioner with reference to the enquiry into the working of Act I. of 1882.

* See paragraph 37 of Circular No. 43, dated 30th May 1889 at page xii of Appendix A, attached to this report.

33. In Cachar repatriation through the instrumentality of the Deputy-Commissioner took place only in regard to the batch of coolies, 19 in number, who were alleged to have been kidnapped from Bengal, and were sent back to their homes from the Khaspur garden. It is stated, however, that some other coolies whose contracts were cancelled made their own arrangements for their homeward journey. In Sylhet out of 19 labourers whose contracts were cancelled under Section 122 of the Act by reason of permanent physical unfitness, seven were repatriated. In Darrang all the coolies whose contracts were cancelled under Section 122, were sent back to their homes. In Nowgong 15 of the 26 labourers whose contracts were cancelled for permanent physical unfitness were sent back to their homes, while in Sibságar 34 were sent back out of 91, and in Lakhimpur 77 out of 178. In all cases of coolies who returned to their homes, the full three months' wages appear to have been awarded, supplemented, since the issue of Chief Commissioner's Circular No. 53, dated the 21st November 1888, by such amount as was necessary to make up the full actual cost

Repatriation of labourers.

of repatriation, the difference being borne by public funds. In the Circular referred to it was laid down that contract labourers, discharged under Section 122 of the Act, the compensation paid to whom under that section is not sufficient to cover the cost of repatriation, should be treated by the same rule as that prescribed for disabled non-contract labourers, the amount by which the compensation paid falls short of the cost of the return of the labourer being met from the Deputy-Commissioner's permanent advance. As regards the coolies whose contracts were cancelled, but who elected not to return to their homes, it appears to be the case that generally they preferred to remain on the gardens with their friends. Some coolies, doubtless, under such circumstances stay in the Province and take up land for cultivation, and settle in local *bastis*, or remain on the gardens as free labourers; but there is no reason whatever to suppose that all those whose contracts were cancelled on the ground of permanent physical unfitness were not at all events afforded the opportunity of returning to their homes, and that if they did not avail themselves of it, the failure to do so was otherwise than voluntary. As regards the varying proportion of labourers who when their contracts are cancelled return to their homes, it must be remembered that much must naturally depend on the stage at which cancelment took place. For instance, if, as was the case at Darrang during the year under report, contracts are cancelled immediately on the arrival of the labourers in the labour district, it is only natural that they should, as a general rule, elect to return to their homes. If, on the other hand, the contracts are not cancelled until the labourers have got thoroughly settled down in the labour district, and possibly passed some years there, an element of doubt is introduced, and it is not unnatural that in many cases they should elect to remain with their relatives or friends in the gardens, who may be expected to care for them, in preference to going back to their homes, where they might be comparative strangers. As regards the general working of Section 122, so far as the payment of the three months' wages is concerned, it is clear from the district reports that some difference of interpretation exists, and that the procedure is not uniform, the point of difference being that, whereas in some districts Inspectors, in exercise of the discretion vested in them by the Act, require managers to pay the three months' wages whether or not the coolie whose contract is cancelled returns to his country, in other districts such payment is required only when the coolie is repatriated or leaves the garden. In the case of one district it is customary to require managers to pay the amount in all cases, and it is held in deposit where the coolies do not at once return to their homes, so as to be available for the purpose of repatriation, if such repatriation should subsequently take place. This matter will be further considered by the Chief Commissioner on receipt of replies to Circular No. 43, dated the 30th May 1889, in paragraph 43* of which it is especially noticed.

* See page xiv. of Appendix A, attached to this report.

Wages.

34. As in previous years, a statement of wages, based on the inspection reports, is given below:—

			Monthly wages. Average. Rs.	A.	P.	Highest. Rs.	A.	P.
Cachar (68)	Act	Men	4	3	2	8	4	3
		Women	3	0	8	7	13	5
	Non-Act	Men	4	11	3	8	8	3
		Women	3	[illegible]	9	8	9	3
		Children	2	[illegible]	6	4	12	9
North Sylhet (41)	Act	Men	4	2	0	6	12	6
		Women	3	1	5	5	2	1
	Non-Act	Men	4	2	7	8	1	0
		Women	3	1	7	5	10	1
		Children	2	0	5	4	8	11
South Sylhet (46)	Act	Men	3	13	10	6	12	6
		Women	3	2	11	4	11	11
	Non-Act	Men	4	3	0	8	0	7
		Women	3	4	4	6	1	8
		Children	1	13	6	5	10	0
Karimganj (40)	Act	Men	4	3	1	5	11	1
		Women	3	2	3	4	7	5
	Non-Act	Men	3	13	5	7	2	9
		Women	3	5	1	3	14	4
		Children	2	4	5	5	1	1
Habiganj (9)	Act	Men	4	6	3	5	15	10
		Women	3	7	2	5	0	0
	Non-Act	Men	3	10	4	6	4	0
		Women	2	15	4	5	5	0
		Children	1	5	5	2	5	6

			Monthly wages. Average. Rs.	A.	P.	Highest. Rs.	A.	P.
Kámrúp (19)	Act	Men	4	0	5	7	3	0
		Women	3	9	0	5	2	6
	Non-Act	Men	3	11	1	7	3	0
		Women	3	5	10	5	1	0
		Children	2	0	1	3	14	6
Darrang (49)	Act	Men	4	8	1	8	11	3
		Women	3	9	1	6	2	4
	Non-Act	Men	5	7	9	12	8	0
		Women	3	7	8	5	7	3
		Children	3	6	7	4	5	6
Nowgong (36)	Act	Men	5	6	8	11	15	4
		Women	4	10	9	9	7	6
	Non-Act	Men	5	13	8	8	1	6
		Women	4	13	11	9	8	0
		Children	2	9	8	5	5	9
Sibságar (35)	Act	Men	4	9	2	12	15	6
		Women	3	14	0	11	11	6
	Non-Act	Men	4	12	3	14	12	3
		Women	3	3	3	10	13	9
		Children	2	5	1	5	6	3
Lakhimpur	Act (101)	Men	5	5	3	9	12	4
		Women	4	10	8	9	3	2
	Non-Act (103)	Men	6	11	9	10	4	1
		Women	5	9	3	10	1	0
		Children	3	8	4	5	8	2

The figures entered in parentheses against each district indicate the number of inspection reports on which the averages are based

The following statement, which, however, is incomplete, owing to the orders on the subject having been overlooked by some officers, is designed to show the rates of wages for two months, one in the cold season, when work is slack and earnings are small, and the other in the rains, when work is brisk and earnings are large :—

			Non manufacturing or cold season monthly wages: Average. Rs.	A.	P.	Highest. Rs.	A.	P.	Manufacturing or rainy season monthly wages: Average Rs	A.	P.	Highest. Rs	A	P.
Cachar (51)	Act	Men	4	2	3	6	1	5	4	6	0	8	10	3
		Women	2	12	9	4	12	0	3	7	7	7	8	10
	Non-Act	Men	4	1	7	6	13	3	4	10	2	9	6	6
		Women	3	0	10	5	5	6	3	4	9	8	12	0
		Children	1	9	6	3	14	9	2	4	4	5	1	9
North Sylhet (41)	Act	Men	4	2	8	7	3	0	4	1	5	6	6	1
		Women	3	2	9	5	2	6	3	0	2	5	1	9
	Non-Act	Men	4	5	7	8	12	0	3	15	7	7	6	1
		Women	3	2	8	5	12	6	3	0	6	5	7	9
		Children	2	1	8	4	13	6	1	15	2	4	4	5
South Sylhet (46)	Act	Men	4	1	5	7	4	5	3	10	4	6	4	7
		Women	3	3	5	5	1	2	3	2	5	4	6	9
	Non-Act	Men	4	6	7	8	11	7	3	15	6	7	5	7
		Women	3	8	5	6	11	5	3	0	3	5	8	0
		Children	2	0	0	5	14	11	1	11	1	5	5	1
Karimganj (40)	Act	Men	4	6	7	*			3	15	8	*		
		Women	3	3	1				3	1	6			
	Non-Act	Men	3	12	11				3	14	0			
		Women	3	4	11				3	5	3			
		Children	2	5	2				2	3	9			
Habiganj (9)	Act	Men	*											
		Women												
	Non-Act	Men												
		Women												
		Children												
Kámrúp	Act	Men	*											
		Women												
	Non-Act	Men												
		Women												
		Children												

* Not furnished, as the information was not given in the inspection reports.

			Non-manufacturing or cold season monthly wages.		Manufacturing or rainy season monthly wages.	
			Average.	Highest.	Average	Highest.
			Rs. As. P.	Rs. As. P.	Rs. As. P.	Rs As. P.
Darrang (28)	Act	Men	4 7 6	7 0 6	4 11 4	8 11 7
		Women	3 7 3	5 8 4	3 13 4	6 2 8
	Non-Act	Men	5 6 3	8 9 2	5 13 1	12 8 0
		Women	3 4 2	5 7 3	3 13 5	5 1 8
		Children	2 4 5	3 6 0	2 10 4	4 5 6
Nowgong	Act	Men	4 10 7	7 0 0	5 12 8	9 0 0
		Women	3 11 4	5 1 6	5 10 5	10 0 0
	Non-Act	Men	5 7 8	10 0 0	6 8 8	13 0 0
		Women	4 3 5	6 0 0	6 2 3	12 11 3
		Children	2 14 0	4 0 0	3 6 8	7 13 6
Sibságar	Act	Men	4 9 0	10 0 0	4 9 5	15 15 0
		Women	3 12 9	7 15 6	3 15 4	15 7 6
	Non-Act	Men	4 3 3	15 15 0	5 5 4	13 9 6
		Women	2 13 8	10 10 0	3 8 11	11 1 6
		Children	2 2 0	4 11 0	2 8 2	6 1 6
Lakhimpur	Act	Men	4 12 0	6 14 10	5 7 3	9 12 4
		Women	3 13 6	5 1 0	4 14 4	9 3 2
	Non-Act	Men	6 0 11	9 9 3	6 12 4	10 4 1
		Women	4 1 7	5 6 3	5 10 8	10 1 0
		Children	2 11 10	3 11 0	3 9 6	5 8 2

The Chief Commissioner does not propose to offer any detailed remarks on these statements, as it is beyond question that they do not include some payments made by the employers of labour to the coolies, although all such payments, whether they take the form of "*ticca pice*" or of bonuses paid on execution of contracts, or allowances made to coolies in hospital, should be taken into account. On this point Mr. Driberg, Deputy-Commissioner of Lakhimpur, writes—

"But these tables do not really give us accurate statistics regarding wages, because to the wages actually earned should be added all bonus given to a coolie on contracting. If a bonus was not given, the monthly wage would have to be raised. Then, all the cost of supporting and feeding sick coolies in hospital should be added. The *haziri* book (*i.e.*, daily attendance register), for instance, against a coolie who had been absent for 15 days in hospital, would show probably half a month's pay, but, for statistical purposes, we should show either half a coolie only or double his pay, or add the amount expended on him at the hospital."

These remarks are undoubtedly correct, but before they had been received, the Chief Commissioner had carefully considered the matter in the light of the experience gained by him during his cold-weather tour of 1888-89, and had issued instructions with a view to provide for the fullest details being obtained and entered in all inspection reports. These instructions will be found in Circular* No. 36, dated the 13th May 1889. The question has also been further noticed in the circular† recently issued regarding the enquiry into the general working of the Inland Emigration law in Assam, and the Chief Commissioner believes that the result of these enquiries will certainly be to throw further and valuable light on the important question of wages, as to which it is possible that some misapprehensions may exist owing to the insufficiency of the statistics hitherto supplied. During the year under report the Deputy-Commissioner of Sibságar, Mr. Knox Wight, made an attempt to ascertain from managers the total amounts, including "*ticca pice*" and bonuses, actually disbursed to their labour force, and obtained figures for 32 gardens which showed that the average pay per head (*i.e.*, including infants) of the whole labour force varied during 1888 from Rs. 3 to Rs. 9 a month. The Chief Commissioner, however, feels some doubt as to whether the statistics thus procured can in all cases be accepted as correct.

* See page iii. of Appendix A attached to this report

† See paragraphs 48-54 of Circular No. 43, dated 30th May 1889, at pages xiv and xv. of Appendix A attached to this report.

In regard to the subject of wages generally, the Chief Commissioner would remark that great caution is necessary in accepting averages under this head, owing to the fact that the various causes in operation are such as in some cases to render the figures entirely misleading. Thus, it does not necessarily follow that an average low rate of wages indicates anything wrong on a garden, as, if it is deduced in the ordinary way, *i.e.*, by dividing the money disbursed by the number of labourers on the register, a low average may sometimes result from a superabundant labour supply, which is always to be desired, the

coolies only working when they please and earning their living in other ways. On the other hand, it is doubtless the case that the figures entered as the "highest wages" are in some cases deceptive. Thus, Mr. A. C. Campbell, the Officiating Commissioner, writes :—

"I found in the Kámrúp district that some coolies earned nearly a rupee per diem extra during the plucking season, but on enquiry it was ascertained that in these cases a whole family gathered their leaves in a single basket, or several baskets of leaves were weighed in the name of a single member of the household. This practice cannot be prevented, and no doubt exists for the sake of convenience in other districts in which labourers with large families are employed."

Again, Mr. Gait, sub-divisional officer of Mangaldai, in the Darrang district, in reply to an enquiry regarding the low rate of wages on certain gardens in that sub-division, reported as follows:—

"Mangaldai gardens differ from gardens higher up the valley in having a plentiful supply of local labour (Kachari). Managers are therefore seldom obliged to trouble themselves about people not turning out, and do not require to offer special inducements to their coolies to do doubles. Coolies are left to do as much or as little work as they chose, the only penalty for short work being that they are not paid for Sundays, unless they have done five *hazaris* during the week. Again, owing to the low price of rice and other supplies, a man has to work fewer days here to earn his livelihood than in other districts where provisions are dearer. These reasons account for low wages generally.

"A special reason for low wages among Act-coolies is the way in which Sections 111 and 112 of Act I. are worked here. For various reasons Act XIII. is not much used here, and agreements under Act I. are practically the only ones known. In other parts of Assam it is, I believe, the custom to put under this Act only those coolies who are resident on the garden. But here the case is quite different. Local labour is plentiful, but there is always the danger of recruiters from gardens higher up inducing the villagers, who partly earn their living on tea-gardens, to leave the sub-division altogether. To prevent this and secure their services, it is a custom here to put under local agreements not only time-expired Bengalis and Kacharis living on the garden, but also Kacháris who have cultivation to look after and who spend a portion of the year in their villages. These people appear in the register of labourers under the Act, but as they are often absent, their names, while going to swell the *hazari* book, bring down the general average wage earned by Act coolies.

"Coolies under Act I. include non-resident as well as resident labourers, while the plentiful supply of labour here enables planters to dispense with the coercive provisions of the Act except in the case of actual desertion."

The above are merely quoted as instances of considerations and facts which are apt to be lost sight of, but which, of course, materially affect the real significance of the figures.

It has also to be borne in mind that in very many cases (*see* paragraph 63 of this report, where the matter is more fully noticed) the amount received by the coolies in direct payment as wages properly so called, or as "*ticca pice*," or as bonuses, by no means exhausts the sources of their livelihood, which are often materially supplemented by other means, such as keeping cattle, which are let out on hire, or the milk obtained from which is sold, the cultivation of land on their own account, working outside the garden, &c. From the above remarks it will be seen that the mere fact of the average rate of wages on a garden being low gives no ground for the conclusion that the coolie's lot is a hard one. On the other hand, it is beyond a doubt that there are gardens on which the lowness of the average is partly due to a considerable proportion of the coolies being unable, owing to ill health or some other cause, to perform the full task, and being accordingly frequently credited with only a portion of the daily wage. The Chief Commissioner has no reason to believe that this is often the case, but the Circular No. 36, above referred to, ought to bring out the fullest information on the point.

Another point of interest in connection with the question of wages is the amount of monthly wage which is usually given in the case of time-expired labourers. In Lakhimpur, the Deputy-Commissioner reports that the rates are ordinarily Rs. 6 for males and Rs. 5 for females in addition to a bonus on re-engagement, usually Rs. 12 for each year; but a case of an important company is mentioned, where a rate of Rs. 8 is given in addition to bonus.

CHAPTER IV.—Offences including Desertions.

Offences committed by tea garden population.

35. The following figures show the offences committed by the tea-garden population in each of the past two years under Act XIII. of 1859 and Act I. of 1882, respectively (excluding the offence of desertion, which is separately dealt with) :—

District	Act XIII. of 1859.		Act I. of 1882.																					
			Section 161.—Garden-sardár failing to report himself.		Section 162.—Garden-sardár failing to comply, with instructions endorsed on way-bills.		Section 163.—Employer refusing or omitting to keep registers, &c.		Section 171.—Labourer absent without cause.		Section 172.—Not taking deserter to police-station.		Section 176.—Employer arresting labourer without sufficient cause.		Section 178.—Labourer guilty of habitual drunkenness or wilful disregard of sanitary regulations.		Section 182.—Enticing away, harbouring, or employing labourer under contract.		Section 183.—Employer refusing to endorse labour contract, &c.		Total.	
	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.	1887	1888.	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.
Cachar	9	29	1	..	..	2	..	..	6	3	..	..	..	1	1	..	12	9	..	..	20	14
Sylhet	21	26	1	..	4	6	..	10	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	6	6	..	..	11	22
Kámrúp	6	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	1
Darrang	12	3	2	1	..	..	..	..	6	25	..	..	..	..	1	..	6	8	..	..	15	34
Nowgong	5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4	..	..	..	5	..
Sibságar	15	109	2	3	..	..	..	..	8	8	..	1	..	..	..	..	5	13	..	..	16	24
Lakhimpur	28	12	..	2	..	..	..	2	2	11	..	1	..	..	..	..	5	7	..	..	7	23
Total	97	177	6	6	4	8	.	12	23	47	.	1	1	1	2	..	38	43	..	..	74	118

The above figures show that offences under Act XIII. of 1859 were nearly doubly as numerous in the year under report as compared with the previous year, this result being mainly due to a large increase in such offences which occurred in the Sibságar district. In no district except Sibságar and Lakhimpur were punishments inflicted for these offences, but the coolies concerned were merely directed to return to their garden and work out their contracts. In the Sibságar district, the large increase which took place in the number of offences under Act XIII. of 1859 was chiefly due to a case in which 54 Kacharis, serving under Act-XIII. contracts, were sent to jail for refusal to fulfil their contracts. These men struck work in a body without any sufficient reason; and although every possible effort appears to have been made to settle the matter amicably, the labourers declined to give in, with the result that there was no alternative but to send them to jail. They were in jail, however, only a few days, when they expressed a strong desire to return to their gardens, which was acceded to. The offenders ultimately admitted that it was their duffadár who had prevented them from working, and that they hoped, by combining, to save themselves from punishment. In the Golághát sub-division of the Sibságar district, 35 persons were ordered to fulfil their contracts; while 13 were sentenced to imprisonment. In the Jorhát sub-division of the same district, in six cases the persons charged were merely ordered to return to work, and in one case imprisonment was inflicted. Thus, out of the 109 persons who committed offences under Act XIII. of 1859 in the Sibságar district during the year, 68 were imprisoned (of whom 54 were released very shortly after sentence, as they agreed to work), and 41 were ordered to resume work. In the Lakhimpur district, the Deputy-Commissioner explains that the decrease in offences under Act XIII. of 1859 is in a measure due to the discontinuance of the practice whereby the police were in the habit of arresting on account of desertion persons on contract under Act XIII. of 1859 who left the gardens as though they had been labourers under Act I. of 1882. This practice was clearly wrong, and should never have been allowed. Of the 12 cases which actually occurred, eight were cases of ordinary contracts to work as coolies for a fixed period at a certain wage, and the coolies, having taken advances, absconded, and were prosecuted. In each of these cases the accused was ordered to return to the garden and complete his contract, and in only four cases was imprisonment inflicted for terms varying from six weeks to two months.

Offences under Act I. of 1882 increased from 74 in the previous year to 118, the increase being mainly due to 12 offences, 10 of which occurred in the district of Sylhet and two in Lakhimpur, under Section 163 (failure of employer to keep registers or make returns) against none in 1887, and to a rise in the number of offences

under Section 171 (absence of labourer without cause). As regards the punishments inflicted for offences against Act I. of 1882, in Darrang, the coolie convicted under Section 151 (garden-sardár failing to report himself) was sentenced to one month's rigorous imprisonment. The three cases under this section in Sibságar resulted in sentences of imprisonment, but the duration of these is not stated. No particulars are given of the two cases which occurred in the district of Lakhimpur. Cases under Section 153 (garden-sardár failing to comply with instructions endorsed on way-bills) related to the Surma Valley Districts only. In Cachar, the punishments inflicted are not stated. In Sylhet, five sardárs were fined and one was imprisoned for one day only. No particulars are given of the 10 cases which occurred in the sub-divisions of South Sylhet and Karimganj of the Sylhet district, under Section 163 (failure of employer to keep registers or make returns). The two cases under this section in Lakhimpur were prosecutions of Managers for not submitting monthly reports of vital statistics. These cases resulted in the infliction of nominal fines (Rs. 5 and Rs. 3). Offences under Section 171 (absence of labourer without cause) showed a considerable increase. The punishments inflicted in Cachar are not stated. In Darrang, of 25 coolies convicted, two were sent back to the garden to complete their contracts, five were fined, and 18 were sentenced to imprisonment. In Sibságar, four of the eight coolies convicted under this section were sentenced to two weeks' rigorous imprisonment, two to rigorous imprisonment for one month, and two to one week's rigorous imprisonment. In Lakhimpur, the 11 cases under this section resulted in the imposition of imprisonment varying from 15 days to one month in six cases; while in the others fines were inflicted. Only one case occurred under Section 172, and this was a conviction in the Lakhimpur district for having arrested deserters within five miles of the station without a warrant and not having taken them to the police-station. The offender was sentenced to pay a fine of Rs. 20. Similarly, only one case occurred under Section 176 (compensation for wrongful arrest), but no particulars have been supplied regarding it by the Deputy-Commissioner of the district (Cachar). Offences under Section 183 (enticing away, harbouring, or employing labourers under contract) were common to all districts except Nowgong. In Cachar, the punishments inflicted are not stated. In Sylhet, one person was punished with fine, and five were rigorously imprisoned for terms varying from one week to one month. In Darrang, seven coolies were sentenced to rigorous imprisonment, and one was fined. In Sibságar, six persons were rigorously imprisoned for one month, one for three weeks, one for 14 days, and one for one week,—the others being sentenced to fines of Rs. 150, Rs. 25, and Rs. 12. No particulars are given of the cases under this section which occurred in the Lakhimpur district. The Deputy-Commissioner of Sibságar especially notices one case, in which the native doctor of a garden enticed away a young coolie girl from his own employer's estate and hid her in the house of a Mahomedan. The native doctor was fined Rs. 200 and the Mahomedan Rs. 150. In Sylhet it is said that cases have occurred in which contractors' chuprasis, bringing up coolies, have attempted to entice away some persons of a batch previously brought up by them, and that one such culprit was brought to justice during the year under report.

The following statement shows the offences committed in each of the past two years by the population of the tea-gardens against the general criminal law; that is, all criminal offences except such as relate to Act XIII. of 1859 and Act I. of 1882:—

District.	Penal Code.																		
	Unlawful assembly and affray.	Rioting.	Culpable homicide or attempt to commit ditto.	Murder.	Attempt to commit suicide.	Assault.	Causing hurt.	Grievous hurt.	Theft.	Criminal trespass.	Lurking house-trespass.	House-trespass.	House-breaking	Dishonest misappropriation.	Dishonestly receiving stolen property.	Criminal intimidation.	Cheating.	Mischief	Obstructing public servants.
Cachar	6	8	..	..	2	7	2	2	22	..	..	1	..	..	8	..	..	..	..
Sylhet	..	..	..	..	1	11	..	5	12	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..
Kámrúp	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Darrang	..	7	..	..	1	..	6	3	13	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..
Nowgong	..	..	2	..	..	2	..	..	6	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	4
Sibságar	9	2	..	..	4	11	4	2	38	2	..	2	..	..	4	..	..	1	..
Lakhimpur	..	..	1	1	2	6	11	2	22	2	4	..	..	..	1	..	..	1	..
Total of 1888	15	17	3	1	7	37	23	16	113	4	5	3	2	..	14	1	..	6	1
Total of 1887	36	15	3	6	6	40	25	8	96	10	3	2	10	4	39	2	2	5	2

District.	Penal Code (contd.)																	
	Criminal breach of trust.	Laying false complaint.	Giving false evidence.	Counterfeit coin.	Unnatural offences.	Insult.	Wrongful confinement.	Offences against public tranquillity.	Contempt of lawful authority.	Escaping from lawful custody.	Rash driving.	Rape.	Forgery.	Negligent act likely to spread infection.	Total.	Act V. of 1861.	Offence under other Acts.	Grand total of all offences.
Cachar	..	.		2	.	..	..		..	..	..	..	..	..	60	33	6	99
Sylhet	1	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	32	.	11	43
Kámrúp	..	.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..		1
Darrang	..	..	..	..	..	..	7	..	..	1	..	..	..	.	39	1	1	41
Nowgong	..	..	..	..	.	..	..	..	..	.	..	..	..	..	14	..		14
Sibságar	6	2	.	..	..	2	.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	66	3	3	91
Lakhimpur	1	..	..	.	..	1	.	..	..	..	..	1	1	2	62	1	20	83
Total of 1888	8	2	..	2	..	4	7	..	..	1	..	1	1	2	296	38	41	375
Total of 1887	8	4	3	1	1	2	2	1	3	4	1	..	4	..	369	58	65	492

There was thus a substantial falling off in offences both under the Penal Code, Act V. of 1861, and under other Acts. As regards offences under the Penal Code, the most noticeable feature in the general totals for the Province is the considerable decrease which took place in the offences of unlawful assembly and affray, rioting, and dishonestly receiving stolen property. On the other hand there was a substantial increase in cases of theft.

In Cachar, the most serious case which occurred was one under Section 147 of the Penal Code (rioting), in which the coolies on the Mahinda garden struck work, came back to the muster ground, and threatened to assault the Assistant-Inspector of Labourers, who was on the garden for inspection purposes, and the Manager, because the Inspector and Manager wished to talk privately to one of the coolies whose fellows distrusted the private conversation. No assault was, however, actually committed, and the Deputy-Commissioner who tried the case thought it sufficient to sentence six of the coolies to imprisonment for one month.

The only other noticeable case (with the exception of such as have an immediate bearing on the relations between the employers and the labourers, which are fully noticed in Chapter VII., paragraph 61 of this Report) was one in Sibságar, in which five coolies were convicted of dacoity, the evidence showing that they broke into a villager's house at night; and that while some held the man down, others robbed the house. In Sylhet, no cases occurred which require separate notice; and the considerable decrease which took place in the number of offences under the Penal Code (from 52 in the previous year to 32) is attributed by the Deputy-Commissioner to the fact that the coolies generally refer differences occurring between themselves to the Manager and abide by his decision instead of coming to the Court. This explanation is satisfactory.

The following table, which includes cases of desertion, compares the ratio of convictions to the tea-garden population for the past two years :—

District.	Mean adult garden population.		Number convicted of any offence.		Number sent to prison (Jail Report).		Ratio per-centum of imprisonments to convictions.	
	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.
Cachar	48,726	51,069	367	289	288	203	78	70
Sylhet	38,048	42,787	148	137	101	66	68	48
Kámrúp	1,933	1,834	6	9	3	1	50	11
Darrang	22,949	26,027	174	197	135	111	77	56
Nowgong	8,813	8,901	52	25	40	18	76	72
Sibságar	46,370	50,225	314	491	271	349	86	71
Lakhimpur	36,149	39,014	264	215	167	166	63	77
Total	203,022	219,861	1,325	1,363	1,005	914	75	67

From the above figures it will be seen (1) that of the persons convicted of offences, 449 (between 32 and 33 per cent.) escaped with some punishment less severe than imprisonment, and (2) that the percentage of imprisonments to convictions showed a

considerable decrease as compared with the previous year, which decrease was common to every district of the Province except Lakhimpur.

Provincial and district figures for desertions.

36. The following table shows the number of adult deserters, district by district, for the past two years:—

District	Total desertions among adults.		Act		Non-Act.		Percentage of desertions on annual strength among					
							Act.		Non-Act.		Total adult population.	
	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.
Cachar	2,447	2,562	905	726	1,542	1,836	8·23	6·68	4·09	4·57	5·01	5·02
Sylhet	2,909	3,223	901	694	2,008	2,529	9·68	7·78	7·01	7·46	7·66	7·53
Kámrúp	66	29	12	11	54	18	2·51	2·26	3·69	1·32	3·86	1·58
Darrang	723	901	489	480	234	421	4·40	3·44	1·98	3·47	3·16	3·44
Nowgong	370	462	84	72	286	390	4·40	3·54	4·11	5·68	4·18	5·22
Sibságar	1,481	1,597	871	919	610	678	3·08	3·05	3·36	3·36	3·19	3·17
Lakhimpur	1,161	1,582	876	904	285	678	4·68	4·32	1·62	3·72	3·21	4·05
Total	9,157	10,356	4,138	3,806	5,019	6,550	5·11	4·36	4·11	4·93	4·50	4·70

As regards the above table, generally, two remarks suggest themselves. In the first place, it has been represented that the figures under the head of Act desertions are in all probability considerably below the truth, because it is the practice of many Managers not to include in their half-yearly returns of deserters coolies who, though they may have left the garden with the intention of deserting, surrender voluntarily, or are re-captured and sent back to work, or are imprisoned during the half-year. Instructions have been issued with a view to explain the real intention of the returns in this respect, which will probably result in more accurate statistics being obtained under this head; but so far as the results here given are concerned, the figures cannot for the above reason be regarded as otherwise than defective. Next, as regards non-Act desertions, it must be remembered that many of the cases shown in the return are not really cases of desertion at all, being cases in which labourers not working under contract either altogether abandon work on tea-gardens or change from one garden to another with the object of improving their position, or merely leave a garden without permission without having any definite object in view. One Deputy-Commissioner has suggested that cases of this nature should be altogether excluded from the returns; but the Chief Commissioner is not prepared to accept this suggestion, because the information as regards non-Act labourers appears to him to be useful; and so long as the desertions or so-called desertions amongst the two classes of labourers (Act and non-Act) are distinguished, there is no danger of confusion.

Turning now to the results shown on the present occasion, it is noticeable that a decrease is shown under the head of Act desertions in all districts except Sibságar and Lakhimpur; while everywhere there has been a falling off in the percentage of desertions to annual strength of Act labourers, as compared with the previous year. On the other hand, non-Act desertions show a more or less decided increase in all districts except Kámrúp, and the percentage of such desertions to the annual strength has also advanced in all cases except Kámrúp and Sibságar. As regards the causes which operate to produce an increase or decrease in the number of desertions, it is difficult to arrive at any very definite conclusion. On this point the Deputy-Commissioner of Sylhet observes—

"Act-I. coolies generally desert to enter into an Act-XIII. contract elsewhere, which gives them cash in hand in the shape of a bonus. It is very difficult indeed to ascertain the real causes of desertions, —women or a vague sense of unrest are frequent causes. It is supposed that one or two coolies of the North Sylhet Tea Company's Gardens who had formerly been in the Assam Valley induced some 18 or 19 others of these gardens to go with them."

Similarly, the Deputy-Commissioner of Lakhimpur writes—

"If a garden is notoriously unhealthy or if there is any mismanagement, desertions are, as a rule, numerous. Again, in remote gardens without any bázárs or hâts near them, coolies abscond, but in all gardens there is risk of desertion amongst new coolies; these will run away for little or no reason beyond dislike to the nature or the amount of the work. I have known coolies desert within a few days of arrival, and even before they had been put to regular work."

In Nowgong, the Manager of one estate explained that the absconders were mostly "newly-arrived *arkati* coolies without wives or property;" and the Manager of another estate suggested, what is doubtless apt to be the case with *arkati* coolies, that desertions may be caused by the fact that the deserters, finding none of their own caste amongst the coolies on the garden, become depressed and discontented, and in this state of mind make an effort to get back to their country.

In paragraph 45* of the general circular of enquiry, the Chief Commissioner has indicated what appear on the information at present before him to constitute the main causes which operate to produce desertion, and has invited full discussion and carefully-prepared statistics bearing on the point. It may be anticipated that the replies to this circular will throw further, and not improbably important, light on the matter, and in the meantime it would be scarcely profitable to pursue the subject.

* See page xiv. of Appendix A to this Report.

Arrests and convictions.

37. The following table shows the number of deserters in each district, with the number of warrants issued and the number of convictions obtained :—

District.	Number deserted (Act labourers).	Number of warrants issued.	Number arrested.					Number convicted.
			By Warrant.	By Manager.	By Police.	By Summons.	Total.	
Cachar	726	48	15	139	5	...	159	154
Sylhet	694	55	32	20	6	...	58	46
Kámrúp	11	2	2	.....	...	...	2	2
Darrang	480	59	25	92	5	...	122	119
Nowgong	72	12	1	12(a)	.....	...	13	11
Sibságar	919	84	74	88	153	12	327	264
Lakhimpur	904	108	52	62	4	...	118	97
Total for 1888 ...	3,806	368	201	413	173	12	799	693
„ „ 1887 ...	4,138	517	198	480	57	...	735	662

(a) Include one coolie who was arrested by a ferryman.

The Chief Commissioner has no remarks to make on these figures except that the proportion of Act deserters arrested (20·9) and convicted (18·2) was in both cases larger than in the previous year, when the corresponding percentages were 17·7 and 15·9 respectively.

As regards the punishments inflicted under Section 175 of the Act on deserters, the district reports are generally silent. In Sylhet, however, it is stated that 44 coolies were punished with rigorous imprisonment for terms varying from one hour to 48 days; and in Lakhimpur, that 97 persons were convicted and sentenced to imprisonment on this account.

The figures for persons arrested above given include one coolie who was arrested in Nowgong by the Sadr Ghat ghatwal. The Deputy-Commissioner, however, explains, with reference to the remarks made on this point in paragraph 10 of the Provincial Report for 1887, that steps have been since taken by him to put a stop to the practice of illegal arrest of deserters by persons not acting on behalf of employers.

Nationality and sex of deserters.

38. The nationality and sex of deserters are shown below :—

Nationality.	Sex.	Number of deserters.				Total.		Percentage of desertions on annual strength among					
		Act.		Non-Act.				Act labourers.		Non-Act labourers.		Total.	
		1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.
Bengal	Men ...	497	427	643	733	1,140	1,160	5·36	4·60	3·75	4·12	3·66	3·67
	Women	223	195	524	596	747	791	2·54	2·23	3·19	3·44		
North-Western Provinces, Oudh, and Behar.	Men ...	1,103	754	1,276	1,355	2,379	2,109	13·51	9·47	8·39	7·81	7·98	6·84
	Women	216	235	747	782	963	1,017	3·98	4·23	5·70	5·28		
Chota Nagpore	Men ...	1,423	1,495	707	1,150	2,130	2,645	5·56	5·76	2·76	4·15	3·21	3·80
	Women	453	500	456	738	909	1,238	2·21	2·11	2·00	2·96		
Nepal	Men ...	11	6	17	4	28	10	23·70	6·26	14·26	3·20	13·29	4·31
	Women	3	...	5	2	8	2	33·33	...	6·09	1·81		
Madras	Men ...	30	6	44	75	74	81	16·82	2·48	7·57	11·52	7·58	6·91
	Women	5	5	28	27	33	32	3·99	2·86	5·32	4·68		
Bombay	Men ..	...	...	2	4	2	4	...	...	1·92	3·39	3·11	2·34
	Women	...	...	5	2	5	2	...	...	4·93	1·59		
Assam	Men ...	163	156	530	950	693	1,106	7·66	6·71	6·11	9·92	5·63	8·84
	Women	11	27	35	132	46	159	1·50	3·44	2·17	8·14		
Total ...	Men ...	3,227	2,844	3,219	4,271	6,446	7,115	7·12	5·86	4·77	5·83	5·72	5·85
	Women	911	962	1,800	2,279	2,711	3,241	2·56	2·48	3·29	3·84	3·00	3·30
Grand Total		4,138	3,806	5,019	6,550	9,157	10,356	5·11	4·36	4·11	4·93	4·50	4·70

These figures do not call for any remark except that Assam coolies are shown as having deserted to a far greater extent than during the previous year; but the majority of these desertions took place amongst non-Act labourers, and were not therefore desertions at all properly so-called. For the rest, if labourers from Madras and Bombay are excluded, desertions were, as in the previous year, most common amongst labourers from the North-Western Provinces, Oudh, and Behar, while they were slightly more frequent amongst labourers from Chota Nagpur than amongst labourers from Bengal. It is, however, very doubtful whether these figures can be said to be reliable, although they doubtless afford some indication of the general tendency and results.

CHAPTER V.—Vital Statistics and Health of Garden Population.

Birth-rate.

39. The following figures show the birth-rate per mille during the two past years, calculated on the mean strength of adult female labourers :—

	1887.	1888.
Cachar	134·0	128·9
Sylhet	103·3	106·6
Kámrúp	103·6	144·5
Darrang	60·5	69·4
Nowgong	81·5	87·1
Sibságar	90·2	100·5
Lakhimpur	88·7	89·2
Total	100·2	103·2

There has thus been a rise in the birth-rate in all districts except Cachar, which is probably due to more accurate reporting. It is, however, very doubtful if any accurate record can be said to be kept of the births which occur on gardens. In the first place enquiries which have been made show that in some cases the prescribed registers, although they are obligatory, are not kept up by managers, while, as pointed out by the Deputy-Commissioner of Lakhimpur, the occurrence of births stands on a different footing from that of deaths, because, whereas a death is at once known, enquiry is often necessary in regard to births, especially when the mother happens to be off work, as must be generally the case. The Chief Commissioner is aware that the low birth-rate on tea-gardens has frequently been remarked on, and he is causing special enquiries* to be made into this matter in connection with the general working of Act I. of 1882. Pending the result of these enquiries, Mr. Fitzpatrick would prefer not to express any opinion on the subject, but he would point out that, in view of the abnormally low proportion which women bear to men amongst the labour force employed on gardens, any comparison of the garden birth-rate with that which prevails amongst the general population must be wholly misleading. For this reason all statistics showing the birth-rate as calculated on the total strength of the labour force have been omitted from the present report. It may be noted that the Deputy-Commissioner of Cachar suggests that the falling off in the birth-rate in that district may be ascribed to the inferior physical condition of the importations recently made, and Mr. Kennedy adds—

* See paragraph 70 of Circular No. 43, dated the 30th May 1889, at page xvii. of Appendix A, attached to this report.

"The coolies recently imported, especially in the last two years, have been undoubtedly a poor lot."

It is to be feared, however, that other causes for the low birth-rate are also at work. Thus, the Deputy-Commissioner of Lakhimpur writes—

"I think it is allowed by both medical officers and planters that abortion is common in all gardens. In some cases it is intentional,—indeed, many say it is commonly practised,—while in other cases it is accidental. A pregnant woman, at the very time that she could earn double and treble pay, does not like being put off duty, she works while she ought to be at rest, and the result is often abortion, either accidental or intentional. It must be recollected that for months before the birth

the woman is not capable of doing full tasks or double tasks, and so she is a loser, and for months after she is hampered with a helpless infant, and unable to earn as much as she would earn had she been childless. That abortion is common is well known to planters and medical men who have had experience of garden coolies."

The Chief Commissioner is not prepared to express any opinion on the above remarks, pending the result of further enquiries which are being made; but it is probable that some degree of truth must attach to them in the case of labourers working on tea-gardens as in the case of all labourers who pursue avocations which involve a direct relation between the amount of work done and the amount of wages earned.

Birth-rate according to nationality.

40. The following table distributes the births among the different nationalities, and strikes the ratio on the mean strength of adult female labourers:—

District	Bengal.			North-Western Provinces, Oudh, and Behar.			Chota Nagpur.			Nepal.		
	Annual strength of women employed under Act I. or otherwise.	Births.	Birth-rate per mille.	Annual strength of women employed under Act I. or otherwise.	Births.	Birth-rate per mille.	Annual strength of women employed under Act I. or otherwise	Births.	Birth-rate per mille.	Annual strength of women employed under Act I. or otherwise.	Births	Birth-rate per mille.
Cachar	8,918	1,020	114 3	6,867	1,100	160 1	7,292	903	123 8	52	...	...
Sylhet	5,881	451	76 6	8,557	1,167	136 3	5,416	497	91 7	5	1	200·0
Kámrúp	353	47	133 1	6	...	...	365	67	183 5	8	1	125·0
Darrang	2,573	151	58 6	1,017	89	87 5	5,789	439	75 8	12	...	...
Nowgong	710	80	112 6	123	31	252 0	2,242	118	52 6	5	...	...
Sibságar.....	5,157	583	113 0	2,920	290	99 3	13,830	1,356	98 0	15	..	...
Lakhimpur	2,332	152	65 1	896	52	58 0	13,412	1,283	95 6	20	1	50 0
Total of 1888...	25,927	2,484	95·8	20,388	2,729	133 8	48,348	4,663	96 4	116	3	25·8
" 1887 ...	25,170	2,265	89 9	18,555	2,288	123 3	43,303	4,288	98 7	102	6	58 8

District.	Madras			Bombay.			Assam.			Total		
	Annual strength of women employed under Act I. or otherwise.	Births	Birth-rate per mille.	Annual strength of women employed under Act I. or otherwise.	Births.	Birth rate per mille	Annual strength of women employed under Act I. or otherwise.	Births.	Birth-rate per mille.	Annual strength of women employed under Act I. or otherwise	Births.	Birth-rate per mille.
Cachar	181	3	16 5	120	3	25 0	63	1	15 8	23,495	3,030	128 9
Sylhet	452	45	99 5	5	...	...	12	8	666 6	20,329	2 169	106·6
Kámrup	.....	...	..	.....	...	...	110	7	63 6	844	122	144·5
Darrang.....	21	...	..	.....	...	...	1,021	45	44·0	10,432	724	69 4
Nowgong	26	8	307 6	.....	...	...	554	82	14 8	3,662	319	87 1
Sibságar	29	3	103 4	5	...	...	565	33	58 4	22,524	2,265	100·5
Lakhimpur	42	3	71 4	.....	...	...	88	7	79·5	16,791	1 498	89 2
Total of 1888 ...	753	62	82 3	131	3	22·9	2,413	183	75 8	98,080	10,127	103·2
" " 1887 ...	660	36	54 5	114	4	35 0	2,324	156	67 1	90,231	9,043	100 2

41. The statistics of mortality in each district for each half-year separately are given in the table below, where they are compared with the corresponding figures of 1887 : -

Death-rate for the year.

District.	Deaths among all classes of labourers, including children.						Ratio of deaths per mille.					
							Half-yearly.				Annual.	
	First half year.		Second half-year.		Total.		First half-year.		Second half-year.			
	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.
Cachar	1,331	1,369	1,332	1,418	2,663	2,787	15·2	15·1	15·1	15·2	30·3	30·3
Sylhet	774	1,123	1,110	1,193	1,884	2,316	13·4	17·4	18·5	17·5	31·9	34·9
Kámrúp	52	72	39	55	91	127	17·9	25·5	13·5	19·4	31·4	44·9
Darrang	640	718	654	826	1,294	1,544	20·9	20·8	20·2	22·3	41·1	43·1
Nowgong	181	281	235	242	416	523	13·8	21·5	18·1	17·7	31·9	39·2
Sibságar	1,187	1,779	1,595	1,890	2,782	3,669	16·6	23·0	21·5	23·5	38·1	46·5
Lakhimpur	1,204	1,393	1,299	1,498	2,503	2,891	22·7	24·2	23·6	24·9	46·3	49·1
Total	5,369	6,735	6,264	7,122	11,633	13,857	17·0	19·8	19·2	20·0	36·2	39·8

The Chief Commissioner regrets to notice that there has been an increase of upwards of 3 per mille in the rate of mortality, which for the year under report stands at exactly the same figure as it stood for 1886. This increase is common to all districts of the Province except Cachar, and, in the case of the Assam Valley districts, is to be largely attributed to the outbreak of cholera, to which reference has been made in paragraph 11 of the report, and which, no doubt, in many instances resulted in the communication of the disease by the new arrivals to labourers already on the gardens. In Cachar, where the death-rate among the general population during 1888 was smaller than in the previous year (25·81 against 28·16 per mille), the improvement was not reflected in the case of the garden population; but in all the other labour districts the general death-rate was higher in the year under report than in the previous year, and the same causes which operated to produce this increase doubtless operated in the same direction in the case of the population of the gardens. The Deputy-Commissioner of Sylhet explains the increased mortality on the gardens by the fact that "during the year under report outbreaks of cholera were very common in almost all parts of the district." This explanation cannot, however, be accepted as sufficient, because, in the first place, the number of deaths amongst the general population caused by cholera in 1888 was, in the Sylhet district, less than the number so caused in 1887 (2,322 against 3,637); and, in the second place, if cholera deaths are excluded altogether from the garden returns, the death-rate amongst the garden population is nevertheless higher for the year under report than for the previous year.

42. The following table shows the mortality among both Act and non-Act adults in the years 1887 and 1888:—

Death-rate among adults

District.	Number of deaths among adults.						Ratio per mille of deaths to annual strength.						Annual strength of total adult population of both Act and non-Act labourers	
	Act		Non-Act.		Total.		Act.		Non-Act.		Total			
	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888	1887.	1888.
Cachar	544	673	1,043	1,242	1,587	1,915	49·7	61·9	27·5	30·9	32·5	37·5	48,726	51,069
Sylhet	408	516	820	1,062	1,228	1,578	44·1	57·8	28·2	31·2	32·0	36·8	38,048	42,787
Kámrúp	14	42	29	45	43	87	28·9	86·9	20·0	33·3	22·2	47·8	1,933	1,834
Darrang	758	880	233	247	991	1,127	67·5	61·5	19·8	20·4	43·1	48·1	22,949	26,027
Nowgong	96	116	193	196	289	311	50·5	58·1	27·7	28·3	32·6	34·9	8,848	8,901
Sibságar	1,461	1,716	477	683	1,938	2,399	51·3	57·9	26·3	33·7	41·7	47·7	46,370	50,225
Lakhimpur	1,383	1,552	472	533	1,825	2,085	72·4	74·3	36·9	29·2	50·4	58·4	36,149	39,014
Total	4,634	5,494	3,267	4,008	7,901	9,502	57·2	62·9	25·8	30·2	38·9	43·2	203,022	219,861

It will be seen from the above figures that the number of deaths amongst adult labourers, whether Act or non-Act, increased in every district, and that a similar result took place as regards the death-rate, except in the case of Act labourers in the district of Darrang. The Chief Commissioner is unable to assign any special reason for this result, except in so far as it was due to the fact that the year was generally less healthy than the preceding year, and to the outbreak of cholera in the Assam Valley. As usual, the mortality

amongst Act labourers was largely in excess of that amongst non-Act labourers. On the information at present available, the only causes which can be assigned for this result are (1) that the statistics of non-Act labourers are not so carefully compiled or scrutinized as those of Act labourers, and (2) that the Act labourers are freshly imported from distant places to a very much greater extent than the non-Act labourers. Excluding the district of Kámrúp, where the figures are small, the advance in the death-rate amongst Act labourers was larger in the districts of the Surma Valley than in those of the Assam Valley. In both the Surma Valley districts the increase in the rate of mortality was considerable in Cachar, 12·2 per mille, and in Sylhet 13·7 per mille, while in the Assam valley districts it was 7·6 in Nowgong, 5·7 in Sibságar, and 1·9 in Lakhimpur. On the other hand, the rate of mortality amongst non-Act labourers (again excluding Kámrúp) was practically stationary in Darrang and Nowgong, while in the Surma Valley districts it advanced by between 3 and 4 per mille, in Sibságar by 7·4 per mille, and in Lakhimpur by 2 3 per mille. The Chief Commissioner earnestly hopes that the enquiries which are now being made into the general working of the Act will throw some further light on these statistics, upon which it is at present impossible to form any decided opinion In the case of Cachar it is explained that about one-half of the deaths among adults occurred amongst the labourers imported in the years 1887 and 1888, and the Deputy-Commissioner adds —

"In 1888 there were imported into the district a very bad lot of coolies, such as Chamars, Musahars, and Dosads, from Chota Nagpur and the Sonthal parganas."

43. The table below shows the recorded causes of the deaths that occurred among adult Act labourers during the past two years :—

Causes of deaths among Act coolies.

Districts	Mean strength of Act labourers employed in 1888.		Deaths from					Total of columns 4 to 8			Annual ratio of deaths per mille.
	First half-year	Second half-year.	Cholera.	Dysentery.	Jungle fever.	Dropsy.	Other causes.	First half year.	Second half-year	Total	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Cachar 1888	10,770	10,923	107	112	102	21	331	275	398	673	61·9
1887	*11,560*	*10,424*	*165*	*68*	*130*	*37*	*144*	*257*	*287*	*544*	*49 7*
Sylhet 1888	8,960	8,868	134	80	61	39	202	254	262	516	57 8
1887	*9,449*	*9,115*	*49*	*109*	*39*	*48*	*163*	*153*	*255*	*408*	44 1
Kámrúp 1888	477	491	10	6	9	6	11	24	18	42	86·9
1887	*517*	*406*	*2*	*1*	...	*3*	*8*	*5*	*9*	*14*	*28 9*
Darrang 1888	13,368	14,630	231	216	37	123	273	389	491	880	62 5
1887	*10,599*	*11,836*	*134*	*186*	*26*	*128*	*284*	*364*	*394*	*758*	*67 5*
Nowgong..... 1888	1,897	2,102	31	21	5	...	58	67	48	115	58 1
1887	*1,963*	*1,345*	*7*	*20*	*5*	...	*64*	*42*	*54*	*96*	*50 5*
Sibságar 1888	29,678	30,418	421	458	94	80	663	808	908	1,716	57 0
1887	*27,617*	*28,945*	*339*	*299*	*120*	*28*	*657*	*590*	*871*	*1,461*	*51 3*
Lakhimpur 1888	20,291	21,348	378	318	101	...	755	726	826	1,552	74 3
1887	*18,066*	*19,264*	*317*	*286*	*96*	...	*654*	*658*	*695*	*1,353*	*72 4*
Total of 1888	85,444	88,783	1,312	1,211	409	269	2,293	2,543	2,951	5,494	62 9
" " 1887	79,773	81,897	1,013	969	416	244	1,992	2,069	2,565	4,634	57 2
" " 1886	82,734	80,381	882	1,082	397	54	2,379	2,077	2,717	4,794	58 9

These figures show that in Cachar the increased mortality was due, not to the effects of cholera or fever, but to a larger number of deaths from dysentery and "other causes." The increase under the head last named is very considerable (from 144 to 331) and the diseases which contributed most largely to produce it were (1) diarrhœa and choleraic diarrhœa 85 deaths, (2) pneumonia 41 deaths, (3) bronchitis 25 deaths, (4) childbed 18 deaths, and (5) general debility 21 deaths. In this district there was a considerable falling off in deaths from cholera (from 165 in the previous year to 107). In Sylhet, on the other hand, deaths from cholera increased nearly threefold (from 49 to 134), and a considerable increase occurred in the deaths from jungle fever (from 39 to 61), while deaths from dysentery decreased (from 109 to 80). In the Assam Valley districts the main causes of the increased mortality were cholera and dysentery, and in the Lakhimpur district an increase under the head of deaths from "other causes" (from 654 to 755).

44. The table below shows the recorded causes of the deaths that occurred amongst adult non-Act labourers during the past two years:—

Causes of death amongst non-Act coolies.

District.		Mean strength of non-Act labourers employed in 1888.		Deaths from					Total of columns 4 to 8.			Annual ratio of deaths per mille.
		First half-year.	Second half-year.	Cholera.	Dysentery.	Jungle fever.	Dropsy.	Other causes.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Total	
1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Cachar	1888	39,498	40,947	198	142	98	48	756	742	500	1,242	30·9
	1887	*36,904*	*38,563*	*236*	*209*	*173*	*58*	*367*	*538*	*505*	*1,043*	*27·5*
Sylhet	1888	23,786	34,961	171	185	189	97	420	503	559	1,062	31·2
	1887	*27,778*	*29,754*	*117*	*144*	*177*	*57*	*325*	*312*	*508*	*820*	*28·2*
Kámrúp	1888	1,381	1,319	9	2	19	1	14	22	23	45	33·3
	1887	*1,404*	*1,479*	*6*	*2*	*8*	*5*	*8*	*17*	*12*	*29*	*20·2*
Darrang	1888	11,793	12,263	47	47	31	26	96	102	145	247	20·4
	1887	*11,741*	*11,723*	*29*	*40*	*20*	*25*	*119*	*104*	*129*	*233*	*19·8*
Nowgong	1888	6,798	7,006	30	30	35	...	101	103	93	196	28·3
	1887	*6,958*	*6,921*	*14*	*18*	*30*	...	*131*	*95*	*98*	*193*	*27·7*
Sibságar	1888	19,677	20,676	208	113	45	40	277	344	339	683	33·7
	1887	*17,864*	*18,314*	*94*	*85*	*61*	*23*	*214*	*243*	*234*	*471*	*26·3*
Lakhimpur	1888	17,980	18,408	113	83	49	84	204	251	282	533	29·2
	1887	*17,424*	*17,545*	*115*	*71*	*35*	*57*	*194*	*249*	*223*	*472*	*26·9*
Total of 1888		129,915	135,581	776	602	466	296	1,868	2,067	1,941	4,008	30·2
" " 1887		120,075	124,301	611	569	504	225	1,358	1,558	1,709	3,267	25·8
" " 1886		107,951	113,086	639	559	480	251	1,342	1,523	1,748	3,271	29·5

The Chief Commissioner does not think that it would serve any useful purpose to analyze these figures in detail. The increase in deaths due to cholera, which took place amongst Act labourers, is apparent also in the case of non-Act labourers, with the exception of the cases of two districts. In Cachar there were fewer cholera deaths amongst non-Act labourers, as there were also amongst Act labourers; but in Lakhimpur, while the cholera deaths amongst Act labourers increased from 317 to 378, the number of such deaths amongst non-Act coolies shows a small decrease (from 115 to 113). On the other hand, dysentery was far less fatal in the case of non-Act than of Act labourers. As regards the results generally amongst non-Act labourers, and as regards those results as compared with the statistics for Act labourers, the Chief Commissioner can only repeat what he has already said, namely, that no sufficient explanation is forthcoming, and that he hopes that further light will be thrown on the matter by the enquiry now in progress.

45. In paragraph 35 of the Provincial Report for 1887 reference was made to some remarks by Dr. Eteson, late Deputy-Surgeon-General, regarding the identity of what is commonly known as anæmia amongst coolies in Assam with *beri-beri*, and the causes which tend to produce that disease. This matter has been further enquired into during the year under report, with the result that the Chief Commissioner, after consultation with the Deputy-Surgeon-General, has issued detailed instructions* for the guidance of officers concerned, which deal with the sanitary precautions to be observed, and provide for the supply of proper statistics. There can be no doubt whatever that this disease contributes largely to swell the returns of sickness and mortality on tea-gardens, whereas, on the other hand, if it is taken in hand at an early stage, the experience hitherto gained shows that it generally yields to proper medical treatment. In addition to the circular which has been issued by the Chief Commissioner, and is above referred to, the Deputy-Surgeon-General has also communicated full instructions to Civil Surgeons, who have been directed, on the occasion of future inspection of tea-gardens, to point out to the managers, with a view to their immediate treatment, all persons suffering from *beri-beri*, and generally to advise managers as to the treatment which should be adopted. Copies of a pamphlet by Dr. Kynsey, of Ceylon, which is the recognized authority on the subject of this disease, and has already been circulated to Civil Surgeons, will be distributed to medical gentlemen in charge of tea-gardens, who will, it is hoped, pay especial attention to this matter, and give such instructions to their subordinates as will enable them to recognize the disease and to apply the necessary remedial measures at its commencement. The Chief

Causes of deaths generally amongst Act and non-Act labourers.

* *See* Circular No. 29, dated the 30th April 1889 (page 1 of Appendix A, attached to this report).

Commissioner further proposes to ask the Government of India to sanction the temporary deputation of a specially-qualified medical officer to this Province for the purpose of making full enquiries into the disease, and Mr Fitzpatrick earnestly hopes that it will be found possible to undertake these enquiries during the approaching cold weather, as he feels convinced that the extent to which the disease of *beri beri* or anæmia operates as a cause of sickness and death amongst immigrants to the Province has as yet been only imperfectly appreciated. Unfortunately, it is not possible to give statistics under this head on the present occasion, but these have been called* for in connection with the general enquiry into the working of Act I. of 1882, and it is hoped that similar statistics will be available for inclusion in all future Annual Reports. Deaths from this disease are at present included under the head "Other causes," where they doubtless play an important part, and it is further probable that amongst the deaths shown as caused by dropsy, some are really due to anæmia, or *beri-beri*, of which disease dropsy is the final stage.

*See paragraph 81 of Circular No 43, dated the 30th May 1888, at page xvi of Appendix A to this report

Death-rate among children.

46. The statement below shows the death-rate during the last two years among children (that is from birth to the age of 16 years) :—

District.	Mean strength of children in 1888.		Deaths from					Total of columns 4 to 8.			Total of 1887.	Annual ratio of deaths per mille.	
	First half-year	Second half-year.	Cholera.	Dysentery.	Jungle fever.	Dropsy	Other causes.	First half-year	Second half-year	Total.		1888.	1887.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Cachar	40,225	41,079	124	166	184	74	324	352	520	872	1,076	21 3	27·5
Sylhet	22,513	24,083	98	111	205	27	297	366	372	738	656	31·6	31·7
Kámrúp	957	1,023	2	7	13	1	17	26	14	40	48	40·7	50 1
Darrang	9,375	10,155	62	85	88	29	153	227	190	417	303	42 9	35 9
Nowgong	4,349	4,501	11	30	39	10	122	111	101	212	127	47·9	30 4
Sibságar	27,850	29,373	220	323	176	35	516	627	643	1,270	844	44 3	31 8
Lakhimpur	19,189	20,344	108	245	146	63	244	416	390	806	678	40·7	37·8
Total of 1888.....	124,459	130,560	625	967	851	239	1,673	2,125	2,230	4,355	...	34·0	...
" 1887.....	115,620	119,151	332	704	799	165	1,732	1,742	1,990	3,732	3,732	...	31·7

Under the head of children therefore there was also an increase in the death-rate, although the rate itself and the extent to which it increased in the Province as a whole were somewhat smaller than in the case of adults. The comparative figures are—

Death-rate amongst adults per mille.		Death-rate amongst children per mille.	
1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.
36·2	39·8	31·7	34 0

As regards the rates of mortality amongst children generally, it will be noticed that in all districts of the Assam Valley the rate exceeded 40 per mille for the year under report, while in Sylhet it was 31·6 per mille and in Cachar 21·3 per mille. The Cachar rate, which is far smaller than that recorded in any other district, appears too favourable to be correct. Again, excluding Kámrúp, where the figures are small, the mortality rate amongst children shows an increase in the case of all districts in the Assam Valley, while in the Surma Valley it decreased in Cachar (from 27·5 to 21·3 per mille) and also very slightly in Sylhet (from 31·7 to 31·6 per mille). In the Assam Valley districts the increase was especially marked in Nowgong, where it represented 17·5 per mille, and Sibságar, where it was 12·5 per mille. In all districts in the Province there was an increase in the deaths which occurred amongst children from cholera and dysentery. In the Nowgong district as many as 26 deaths were caused on one garden alone by measles, and Dr. Rudduck, the medical officer of the garden, writes on the point:—

"I consider the heavy mortality from measles to be due to two causes : (1) the habit of keeping most of the children without any clothing even when the eruption was at its height, and (2) the objection of parents to any medicine being given to their children."

It is scarcely necessary to remark that such risks as those mentioned by Dr. Rudduck are not peculiar to tea-gardens, but represent risks to which children are exposed all over the country. Something, however, might be gained if the native doctors on gardens were directed to exercise more care in protecting children from chills under such circumstances, and attention will be called to this point.

On the general subject of mortality amongst children on tea-gardens the Deputy-Commissioner of Lakhimpur observes—

"Many of the deaths, I am afraid, are due to want of care on the part of the mothers. A child to a good working coolie woman is a nuisance. If she takes proper care of her infant, she must in a measure neglect her work and earn less money."

In connection with the general investigation into the working of Act I. of 1882, full enquiries* have been made regarding the conditions of child life and the health statistics of children on gardens, and, on receipt of replies to the Circular of the 30th of May last, such further instructions as may seem necessary will be issued. Special attention has further been drawn to a suggestion made in paragraph 12, Chapter VIII., of the Provincial Immigration Report for 1883, that children on gardens should be regularly inspected by the native medical officer in charge.

* See paragraph 68 of Circular No. 43, dated the 30th May 1888, at page xvii. of Appendix A, attached to this report.

Order of demerit as regards death-rate

47. The following is the order of demerit of the various districts, both with regard to the three different classes in the labour force and to the total mortality:—

	Order of mortality among			
	Act adults.	Non-Act adults.	Children.	Total.
Cachar	4	4	6	7
Sylhet...	6	3	5	6
Kámrúp	1	2	4	3
Darrang	3	7	3	4
Nowgong	5	6	1	5
Sibságar	7	1	2	2
Lakhimpur	2	5	4	1

As in previous years, Cachar was the most healthy, and Lakhimpur the most unhealthy, district in the Province. The only other noticeable result is that the district of Sylhet has improved its position, and was during the year under report the second most healthy district in the Province.

Nationality according to the country of origin

48. The statement below shows the mortality distributed according to nationality, and gives figures for adults only:—

Nationality.	Sex.	Deaths amongst adults of both classes.		Ratio per mille of deaths to annual strength.		Annual strength of adults of both Act and non-Act labourers.	
		1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.
Bengal	Men ...	792	892	30·8	33·9	51,500	52,947
	Women ...	799	906				
North-Western Provinces, Oudh, and Behar.	Men ...	1,118	1,165	46·4	44·7	41,937	45,693
	Women ...	838	885				
Chota Nagpur	Men ...	2,320	2,876	43·7	52·9	94,575	104,761
	Women ...	1,830	2,553				
Nepal	Men ...	5	5	18·9	36·5	268	277
	Women ...	.....	5				
Madras	Men ...	20	19	28·0	29·9	1,424	1,633
	Women ...	20	30				
Bombay	Men ...	1	3	4·5	15·6	225	256
	Women ...	.....	1				
Assam.....	Men ...	106	108	12·7	11·3	13,115	14,315
	Women .	52	54				
Total	Men ...	4,362	5,068	38·6	41·6	112,792	121,781
	Women ...	3,539	4,434	39·2	45·1	90,231	98,080
Grand Total	.....	7,901	9,502	38·9	43·2	203,023	219,861

The most noteworthy point in the preceding table is that the figures disclose a remarkable variation from what has been observed for several years as regards the relative rate of mortality amongst labourers from the North-Western Provinces, Oudh, and Behar, and from Chota Nagpur respectively, the mortality rate amongst the latter having largely exceeded that amongst the former. This result is altogether opposed to previous experience. In every district in the Province, except Sylhet and Nowgong (where the figures are very small), the death-rates amongst labourers from Upper India decreased, while in every district without exception the rate increased amongst labourers belonging to Chota Nagpur. Possibly, this result may be in some measure due to the fact that immigrants from Chota Nagpur were less able to resist the attacks of cholera than those from Upper India; but, however this may be, the deviation from previous experience is remarkable; and it is also curious that the death-rate amongst labourers from the North-Western Provinces, Oudh, and Behar should, in spite of the cholera outbreak and the generally unhealthy character of the year, as compared with that which succeeded it, have actually decreased.

Proportion of unhealthy gardens in each district.

49. The following statement shows the proportion of unhealthy gardens in each district. All gardens which have ten or more deaths on them during the year, and the death-rate on which exceeds seven per cent., are classed as unhealthy gardens :—

District.	Number of gardens.		Number of unhealthy gardens.		Percentage of unhealthy gardens.	
	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.
Cachar	182	184	7	7	3·8	3·8
Sylhet	114	112	5	4	4·3	3·5
Kámrúp	89	89	...	2	...	2·2
Darrang	85	85	10	12	11·7	14·1
Nowgong	65	61	2	2	3·0	3·2
Sibságar	211	211	10	21	4·7	9·9
Lakhimpur	149	150	15	17	10·0	11·3
Total	895	892	49	65	5·4	7·2

The Chief Commissioner regrets to find that the proportion of unhealthy gardens for the Province has advanced from 5·4 per cent. in the previous year to 7·2, and that this advance is common to all districts in the Assam Valley. In the Surma Valley, on the other hand, the figures closely correspond with those of the previous year. The causes of unhealthiness will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

Unhealthy gardens in Cachar

50. There were seven unhealthy gardens in Cachar, against the same number in 1887, as shown below:—

Sub-division	Name of garden.	Mean strength		Deaths.			Ratio per mille.			Deaths among Act labourers.	
		First half-year.	Second half-year.	First half-year	Second half-year.	Total	First half-year.	Second half-year	Annual.	Number.	Ratio per mille
Sadr	Karkari	467	501	20	21	41	42·8	41·9	84·7	3	170·4
	Majargram	444	471	26	7	33	58·5	14·8	73·3	4	45·4
	Báladhan	533	621	19	39	58	35·6	62·8	98·4	33	166·6
	Dhubidar	539	522	19	24	43	35·2	45·9	81·1	13	106·3
	Durmikhál	499	517	24	11	35	50·0	21·2	71·2	9	72·5
	Chandna	187	224	11	20	31	58·9	89·2	148·0	22	226·3
	Nágádum	262	316	54	30	84	206·1	94·9	301·0	48	301·6
	Total unhealthy gardens	2,912	3,172	173	152	325	59·4	47·9	107·3	....	
	Total of District.	90,494	92,950	1,369	1,418	2,787	15·1	15·2	30·3	....	....
	Balance, i. e., healthy gardens	87,582	89,778	1,196	1,266	2,462	13·6	14·1	27·7	....	....

The causes of deaths are shown below :—

Sub-division.	Name of garden.	Cholera.	Dysentery.	Fever.	Dropsy.	Anæmia.	Other causes.	Total.
Sadr ...	Karkari	22	3	2	2	2	10	41
	Májargram	18	...	4	1	...	10	33
	Báládhan	1	18	10	5	...	24	58
	Dhubidar	4	19	6	9	...	5	43
	Darmikhál	2	12	6	...	...	15	35
	Chandua	5	13	2	3	1	7	31
	Nágádum	25	18	10	4	...	27	84
	Total ...	77	83	40	24	3	98	325

Of the above gardens, three, namely Dhubidar, Chandua and Nágádum, were on the list in 1887; and of these again, two, Nágádum and Chandua (Changdara), were on the list in 1886. The case of Nágádum, with a death-rate among Act labourers of 301·6 per mille, is especially bad. It was on the list last year, though there was no cholera there. Chandua comes next with a death-rate of 226·3 per mille. The death-rate in Báládhan is also very high (166·8 per mille).

In spite of the requirements of Rule 150 of the Rules issued under Section 143 of Act I. of 1882, which lays down that every unhealthy garden "shall at once be inspected by the Civil Surgeon, whose report on it shall be embodied in the Annual Report sent up by the Deputy-Commissioner," the Chief Commissioner regrets to notice that at the time of writing this report (end of June 1889), the Civil Surgeon's reports have only been received in regard to three of the gardens included in the list of unhealthy gardens for 1888, namely Karkari, Májargram and Chandua. Mr. Fitzpatrick is aware that on the present occasion exceptional circumstances existed which prevented the Civil Surgeon leaving the head-quarters station at the particular time when he should have been engaged upon inspection work ; but, in future, care should be taken that the inspection of unhealthy gardens is carried out by the Civil Surgeon as soon as possible after receipt of the returns showing that any particular garden is on the black list. The result of failure in this respect is that the Deputy-Commissioner is unable to comply with the rule which requires that he should embody in his report the results of the Civil Surgeon's inspection, and a further result is that the Provincial Report is necessarily incomplete. A circular on this subject will be issued to all Deputy-Commissioners, and the Deputy-Surgeon-General will also be asked to communicate instructions to Civil Surgeons with a view to secure the punctual performance of this important duty. It will further be pointed out to all inspecting officers that inspection reports should be sent in immediately after the particular inspection to which they relate, as there is reason to fear that in some cases this is not done.

As regards the Nágádum Garden, it was stated in last year's report that a Committee convened in August 1887 under Section 128 of the Act had cancelled the contracts of six labourers as permanently incapacitated, and transferred three others to another garden. They also recommended that no more North-Western Provinces coolies should be recruited for two years; that the jungle round the lines should be cleared, and the space cultivated; that drains should be cut; that the use of the Nágádum stream for drinking purposes should be prohibited, and that quarantine lines should be maintained for new coolies. These proceedings were approved by the Chief Commissioner, but no further information has been supplied. The Civil Surgeon's further report on this garden is awaited by the Chief Commissioner.

The Chandua Garden was inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 12th April 1889. His report was as follows:—

"*First Half.—Free Labourers.*—No deaths amongst adults. Four deaths amongst children. Two convulsions,—six days' and 24 days' old.

"*Act Coolies.*—Four dysentery,—three cholera.

"*Second Half.—Free Labourers.*—Also no deaths amongst adults. Children : 2 dysentery, 1 consumption, 1 burnt, and 1 pneumonia.

"*Act Coolies.*—Fifteen deaths: 7 dysentery, 3 dropsy, 1 suicide, 2 cholera, 1 tetanus, and 1 consumption.

"Last year I inspected this garden, and for the same reason, *viz.*, deaths amongst Act coolies mostly.

"This year there is not a single death amongst free adult labourers, showing that for selected and good coolies the garden is not unhealthy; but any garden must be, if the wretched type of coolies I saw is imported, and the same year after year. The Manager informed me that he had remonstrated against the importation of these poor physique North-Western Province coolies. It is not true economy this, and it would be better to import half the number of good strong, healthy coolies, even costing much more. In fact, it is time that the importing of the class of coolies above alluded to should cease to this garden; but it is still going on this year, 1889, and I suppose next year Chandua will figure in the list of high mortality gardens."

A Committee will now be convened under Section 128 of the Act to consider the case of this garden.

Of the remaining gardens included in the list, the only reports by the Civil Surgeon which have been received are those relating to the Karkari and Májargram Gardens. The former of these was inspected on the 17th April 1889 by the Civil Surgeon, who reported that the high death-rate was almost entirely due to an outbreak of cholera; that, previous to his visit, it had been decided to remove the coolies' lines from their old site, which was somewhat low, to the *alas* on the garden itself; that this change was being carried out; and that, from the appearance of the sites, the new lines should be very healthy. The drainage and water-supply were found to be good. The Májargram Garden was inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 2nd April 1889, and the following extract from his Report is interesting :—

"The mortality has been wholly due to an outbreak of cholera during the past year, 1888, first half. Of non-Act coolies alone, out of 21 deaths, 18 died of this disease, and mostly confined to huts near a stream of water running between them. This stream, in spite of warnings, the coolies would persist in using for all purposes,—drinking, cooking and washing; and consequently when cholera once started, it was easy to imagine the disease being carried on. Cholera had been around the garden for some time in some of the *bastis* above the coolie lines. The houses were occupied entirely by non-Act coolies, to which the outbreak of the disease confined itself. None of the Act coolies were attacked or died of the disease. These huts and lines have nearly all been removed to another site away from the stream."

The Chief Commissioner regrets not to be able to give particulars regarding the other unhealthy gardens; but it is impossible on this account to delay the Provincial Report, the more punctual submission of which has been frequently enjoined by the Government of India; and Mr. Fitzpatrick must therefore content himself with assuring the Governor-General in Council that the reports of the Civil Surgeon will be carefully scrutinised, and that such action as may appear necessary or desirable will in all cases be taken.

The rule under which gardens are classed as unhealthy only requires gardens to be so classed in which, the number of deaths having exceeded nine, the mortality has exceeded 7 per cent. of the total labour force, *i.e.*, of the total number of Act and non-Act labourers taken together. In the case of the following gardens, although the mortality-rate calculated on the total labour force did not exceed 7 per cent., the mortality amongst Act labourers was nevertheless excessive :—

Number.	Sub-division.	Name of garden.	Mean strength.		Deaths.			Ratio per mille.			Deaths amongst Act labourers.	
			First half-year.	Second half-year.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Total.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Annual.	Number.	Ratio per mille.
1	Sadr	Guábári	309	281	4	12	16	12·9	42 7	55 6	11	142·4
2	"	Rosekándi	1,453	1,711	10	34	44	6·8	19·8	26·6	20	85·9
3	"	Lydiácherra...	321	448	5	15	20	15 5	33 4	48 9	14	78·8
4	"	Marticherrá	861	940	14	24	38	16 2	25·5	41 7	22	90 3
5	Hailákándi.	Ainákhál	1,734	1,866	29	37	66	16 7	19 8	36 5	38	66·5
6	"	Láláchérrá	786	877	16	18	34	20 3	20·5	40·8	21	71 6

This statement is not, as above explained, prescribed by the rules; but having regard to the fact that the mortality is, as a rule, much more severe amongst Act labourers than amongst non-Act labourers, and further, bearing in mind the special provisions of Section 130 of Act I. of 1882, the Chief Commissioner is disposed to think that a table of this sort should always be furnished, and that gardens showing a death-rate above 7 per cent. in the case of labourers, when the number of deaths exceeds 10, should always be specially inspected and reported upon by the Civil Surgeon. This matter will be further dealt with later on in this report (*see* paragraph 58 *infra*).

Of the six gardens included in the above list, the Civil Surgeon's reports have been received regarding three only, namely Rosekándi, Ainákhál, and Lálácherrá. In these cases the Civil Surgeon failed to notice any particular sanitary defects, but the following remarks made by him regarding the physique of the coolies on the Rosekándi, Ainákhál, and Lálácherrá gardens are instructive. In regard to Rosekándi, Dr. Partridge writes—

"*Act Coolies.*—Sixteen deaths, of which 11 from dysentery, 2 diarrhœa, 2 dropsy, and 1 fever. Of the dysentery cases, they all belonged to a batch of North-Western Provinces coolies that arrived in 1888. I made a note at the time of the arrival of these coolies in the depôt, as I felt certain I should hear of high death-rate in the garden they were going to. They were dirty in person and clothing; and, though not then suffering from any specific disease, their appearance was such as to lead me to the conclusion that sooner or later disease would break out amongst them."

As regards Ainákhál Dr. Partridge reported—

"I would here again point out that the excessive rainfall undoubtedly had a great deal to do with rendering the coolies liable to disease, more particularly in the North-Western Provinces coolies, who are noted for bad physique, and will persist in starving themselves to save a few pice."

And in regard to Lálácherrá—

"*Act Coolies.*—Fourteen deaths, all amongst North-Western Provinces coolies, except three in Bengalis. Those North-Western Provinces coolies were imported during 1888, the year under review, except one or two in 1887. They were, as usual, unfit subjects for work in this district. It is the old story,—originally weakly and half starved; they do not attempt to improve their health by feeding properly, or in a reasonable mode, striving to save every pice they can pick together. The principal disease they died from was dropsy or diarrhœa, produced from general debility."

Steps will be taken, by appointment of committees or otherwise, with a view to stop the importation of unfit coolies into these three gardens, and special reports should be submitted by the Civil Surgeon on Guabari, Lydiacherra, and Martiacherra.

Unhealthy gardens in Sylhet

51. There were four unhealthy gardens in Sylhet in 1888, against five in 1887:—

Sub division.	Name of garden.	Mean strength.		Deaths.			Ratio per mille.			Deaths among Act labourers.	
		First half-year.	Second half-year.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Total.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Annual	Number.	Ratio per mille.
South Sylhet	Sátgáon	1,049	1,140	89	19	108	84·8	16 6	101·4	46	119·4
	Mirzápur	420	477	20	18	38	47 6	37 7	85 3	8	91·9
	Dhalái	479	520	25	14	39	52 1	26 9	79·0	14	74·8
Karimganj	Anipur	1,362	1,497	44	63	107	32 3	42·0	74 3	...	...
	Total of unhealthy gardens.	3,310	3,634	178	114	292	53 7	31 3	85·0	...	...
	Total of District	64,259	67,912	1,123	1,193	2,316	17 4	17·5	34 9	...	...
	Balance, *i.e.*, healthy gardens.	60,949	64,278	945	1,079	2,024	15·5	16 7	32·2	...	...

The following table shows the causes of the deaths:—

Sub-division.	Name of garden.	Cholera.	Dysentery.	Fever.	Dropsy.	Anæmia.	Other causes.	Total.
South Sylhet ...	Sátgáon	67	9	6	2	...	24	108
	Mirzápur	5	4	6	8	...	15	38
	Dhalái.....	16	2	9	2	...	10	39
Karimganj	Anipur	31	22	22	12	...	20	107
	Total..... ...	119	37	43	24	...	69	292

Of the above gardens, Dhalái would not be on the list except for cholera ; but as it was on the unhealthy list both in 1886 and 1887, the garden clearly needs watching. Sátgáon and Anipur appear on the list for the first time, and their inclusion is due to cholera. Mirzápur is also on the unhealthy list for the first time, but independently of cholera ; and further enquiry is therefore called for. The Civil Surgeon's reports on these gardens, which should have been submitted before this, are awaited by the Chief Commissioner. It is satisfactory to notice that none of the South Sylhet Company's gardens were included in the list of unhealthy gardens for the year under report. Possibly, the sickness at starting may have been due to fresh clearances or new arrivals.

Unhealthy gardens in Kámrúp.

52. Two gardens are returned as unhealthy in Kámrúp. In the previous year, no gardens were returned as unhealthy in this district:—

Name of garden.	Mean strength.		Deaths.			Ratio per mille.			Deaths among Act labourers.	
	First half-year.	Second half-year.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Total.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Annual.	Number.	Ratio per mille.
Chunsali	334	376	20	10	30	59·8	26·5	86·3	15	132·7
Bordwar	202	243	9	7	16	44·5	28·8	73·3	8	148·0
Total of unhealthy gardens.	536	619	29	17	46	54·1	27·4	81·5	...	.....
Total of District.	2,815	2,834	72	55	127	25·5	19·4	44·9	...	.....
Balance, *i.e.*, healthy gardens.	2,279	2,215	43	38	81	18·8	17·1	35 9	...	.....

The following table shows the causes of deaths :—

Name of garden.	Cholera.	Dysentery.	Fever.	Dropsy.	Anæmia.	Other causes.	Total.
Chunsali	13	1	7	4	...	5	30
Bordwar	...	4	3	1	...	8	16
Total.....	13	5	10	5	...	13	46

The first of the above gardens is brought on the unhealthy list by cholera, which occurred in connection with the géneral outbreak amongst immigrants during the opening months of the year under report. In the case of the Bordwar Garden,—where there was no cholera,—the Chief Commissioner is not satisfied with the explanation given, which is that an inferior class of coolies were recruited in considerable numbers, amongst whom many deaths occurred on first arrival, and also that malarial fever has been spreading of late all over the country. This garden should be carefully watched.

Unhealthy gardens in Darrang.

53. Twelve gardens are returned as unhealthy in Darrang, against 10 in 1887:—

Name of garden.	Mean strength.		Deaths.			Ratio per mille.			Deaths among Act labourers.	
	First half-year.	Second half-year.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Total.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Annual.	Number.	Ratio per mille.
Parwa	208	217	14	2	16	67·3	9·2	76·5	2	142·8
Nahorani	554	620	18	31	49	32·4	50·0	82·4	40	114·8
Dhekiajuli	500	496	15	20	35	30·0	40·3	70·3	30	131·3
Sadharughop ...	475	446	15	22	37	31·5	49·3	80·8	22	131·3
Gellahating ...	405	412	5	28	33	12·3	67·9	80·2	21	128·1
Barpukhuri ...	632	649	30	18	48	47·4	27·7	75·1	20	85·7
Borgong	450	439	11	21	32	24·4	47·8	72·2	20	145·4
Behali	665	646	24	49	73	36·0	75·8	111·8	36	178·0
Ghilladhari ...	558	598	15	28	43	26·8	46·8	73·6	35	131·5
Dikorai	1,060	1,266	42	58	100	39·6	45·8	85·4	46	77·4
Mijikajan	725	756	32	31	63	44·1	41·0	85·1	13	62·7
Tokonkata	146	164	6	6	12	41·0	36·5	77·5	...	...
Total of unhealthy gardens.	6,378	6,709	227	314	541	35·5	46·9	82·4	...	...
Total of District ...	34,537	37,049	718	826	1,544	20·8	22·3	43·1	...	...
Balance, *i.e.*, healthy gardens.	28,159	30,340	491	512	1,003	17·4	16·8	34·2	..	...

The following table shows the causes of deaths:—

Name of garden.	Cholera.	Dysentery.	Fever.	Dropsy.	Anæmia.	Other causes.	Total.
Parwa	7	...	4	...	...	5	16
Nahorani	3	19	...	9	...	18	49
Dhekiajuli...	31	1	1	...	...	2	35
Sadharughop	3	19	2	3	...	10	37
Gellahating	1	7	5	15	...	5	33
Barpukhuri	4	16	1	9	...	18	48
Borgong	2	9	...	6	...	15	32
Behali	23	22	3	7	...	18	73
Ghelladhari	20	13	...	5	...	5	43
Dikorai	15	42	6	10	...	27	100
Mijikajan	2	11	10	3	...	37	63
Tokonkata...	5	....	6	1	...	...	12
Total	116	159	38	68	...	160	541

Of the above gardens, four, namely, Nahorani, Gellahating, Behali, and Tokonkata, appeared on the unhealthy list last year also.

The Deputy-Commissioner reports as follows:—

"*Parwa.*—This garden was inspected by the Civil Surgeon on 21st May 1889. He remarks as follows :—

"'The high mortality in 1888 was due to the prevalence of cholera and measles. Out of 16 deaths, 9 were from cholera and 5 from measles. The coolies are a healthy lot, and the sanitary arrangements of the garden are satisfactory. In order to obviate the contamination of existing drinking water, it is necessary to sink a *pucca* well with pump and cistern."

"*Nahorani.*—This garden was inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 29th May 1889. He remarks as follows :—

"'In 1888, the prevailing diseases were dysentery, pneumonia, and anæmia. The majority of deaths occurred from bowel-complaint, and notwithstanding the good lines and good drinking water; the

only reason I can assign is that the coolies, while working in distant parts of the garden, drink when thirsty any sort of water they can get close by. I advised the Manager to send *kalsis* of drinking water with each gang of coolies, which he promised to do.

"'The new line referred to in previous reports are completed. The *pucca* well is under construction, which will be provided with pump and reservoir. Medical and sanitary arrangements are good.'

"*Dhekiajuli.*—This garden was inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 30th May 1889 He remarks as follows :—

"'The Manager states that nearly all the books were burnt, together with some of the lines, Hospital, and Manager's bungalow, so I had only two Registers (Daily Attendance and Sick Registers, the latter written up from 22nd May to date) to go upon. From the Attendance Register, I found 14 deaths; but from what disease they died and class of coolies is not shown there. As far as information could be gathered, the last year's high mortality was due to cholera.

"'The lines are scattered about in different parts of the garden. Those near the Government road are built with low plinths,—bad drains: the sooner they are corrected, the better.

"'The water-supply from the well near the tea-house is defective. A *pucca* well in the centre of the lines with a pump and cistern is urgently needed. The Manager states (in his letter, dated 1st June 1889) that new lines will soon be built, and taps, piping and pump have been brought for a second well. The sooner these are finished, the better.

"'A qualified medical man ought to be in charge instead of a compounder.'

"*Sadharughop.*—This garden was inspected on the 23rd May 1889. The remarks were as follows :—

"'In 1888, among 463 labourers, there were 37 deaths,—causes of death being dysentery 18, anæmia 6; and the other diseases make up the total 37, the ratio being 7·77 for the whole labour force. The high mortality was due to dysentery, anæmia, and cholera. The Medical Officer and the Manager who took charge of the garden in February last explained to me that the mortality occurred mostly in a batch of coolies imported last year, whose health on landing was indifferent.

"'The Manager promises to improve the lines and re-build a new hospital, as suggested.'

"*Gellakating.*—This garden was inspected on the 22nd May 1889. The remarks were as follows:—

"'The high mortality was due to dropsy, dysentery, and remittent fever. I noticed that, among coolies suffering from anæmia, Dr. McIntyre has been using *thymol*, and found it effective in the majority of anæmic cases. The dysentery and fever, in my opinion, are due to climatic changes.

"'There is swampy low land close to the lines, which required to be drained off or to convert it to a bathing tank.

"'All the other points are well attended to by the Manager.'

"*Barpukhuri.*—This garden was inspected on the 24th May 1889. The remarks were as follows :—

"'In 1888, the high death-rate among Act coolies is due to a few cases of cholera occurring among them. All the sanitary arrangements are well attended to by the Manager and Dr. McIntyre.'"

"*Boryong.*—This garden was inspected on the 25th May 1889. The remarks were as follows:—

"'On inspecting the Death Registers, I found 40 deaths (Act 32, non-Act 8) in 1888, the ratio being 18·18 among Act and 3·33 among non-Act. The very high rate of mortality was due to anæmia and dropsy 12, dysentery 10 ; and the other diseases contribute the rest. The water from the existing wells is liable to contamination. In order to obviate this, the wells are required to be covered and a pump attached to each. The necessary steps ought to be taken to prevent the men using river-water during the rains.

"'The attention of the Manager is drawn to the remarks made in paragraphs 6, 11, 36, and 39 of this report.

"'If the suggestions are carried out, I anticipate better results.'

"*Ghilladhari.*—This garden was inspected on the 23rd May 1889. The remarks were as follows:—

"'The total deaths among Act coolies were 26, of which 7 from cholera and 10 from dysentery, the ratio being 9·7; but if the 7 deaths from cholera be excluded, the percentage falls to 7·0. The high death-rate was due to cholera and bowel-complaints which occurred subsequent to the cholera outbreak. Dr. McIntyre states that a great many batches came into the garden with indifferent health; among them some were landed with dysentery. The sooner the new lines are finished and the coolies removed from the old lines, the better.'

"*Dikorai.*—This garden was inspected on the 22nd May 1889. The remarks were as follows:—

"'The death-rate in 1888 was high on account of an outbreak of cholera among the newly-imported coolies. The drinking water is very good; the hospital with ample supply of medicines is under the supervision of Dr. McIntyre, who visits weekly and oftener if required. He is using *thymol* extensively for the anæmic cases, with good result; and I have seen many specimens of *anchylostoma duodenalis*.'

"*Behali.*—This garden was inspected on the 25th May 1889. The remarks were as follows:—

"'Since 22nd March 1887, the deaths registered for the whole labour force were 133, *i.e.*:—

In 1887	Act	22	.....	Non-Act	25	Cholera.
" 1888	"	36	.....	"	27 } Act	23
" 1889	"	14	.....	"	9 } Non-Act ...	16

"'Cholera and dysentery alone returned 64 deaths ; hence the high death-rate in 1887 and 1888. The whole labour force paraded, and found about one-fourth in an anæmic condition. The rest are in good health. The following defects are noticed:—

"'(1) The lines near the swamp referred to in paragraph 1 of this report ought to be condemned.

"'(2) The water from the wells, though good, is liable to contamination. *Pucca* wells with pumps and cisterns ought to be introduced.

"'(3) The coolie force being large, a thoroughly competent and qualified medical man ought to be engaged, instead of a compounder, who knows nothing of complicated diseases.

"'The Manager is going to build a new set of lines in a new site during this year.'

"*Mujikajan.*—This garden was inspected on the 24th May 1889. The remarks were as follows:—

"'Out of 63 deaths, 20 were from measles, which was epidemic last year in this garden. This accounts for the high mortality among non-Act coolies.'

"*Tokonkata.*—This garden had no deaths among Act coolies in 1888. The number of Act coolies was only 14, and these were imported in the second-half of the year. The death-rate among non-Act coolies was 8 per cent. The lines are good. The sinking of two or three more wells is advisable. This garden was inspected by the Assistant-Commissioner, Mangaldai, on the 25th May 1888."

As regards the above gardens, committees should be held in the case of Nahorani and Gellahating, both of which appeared on the unhealthy list last year, and the Sadharughop, Borgong, and Bahali gardens should be carefully watched.

In addition to the above gardens, the following list is given of gardens on which there were 10 or more deaths amongst Act coolies, and the death-rate among such coolies exceeded 7 per cent. during 1888:—

Name of garden.	Mean strength.		Deaths.			Percentage of deaths.			New coolies imported during the year.
	First half-year.	Second half-year.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Total.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Annual.	
Baijuli	533	640	33	23	56	6·19	8·59	9·78	379
Modopi	212	203	12	6	18	5·66	2·95	8·61	100
Hattribári	246	250	12	9	21	4·87	3·60	8·17	77
Daputa	241	301	11	13	24	4·56	4·31	8·87	305
Dulapadang...	202	253	13	14	27	6·43	5·53	11·96	...
Majaligarh	278	327	7	23	30	2·51	7·03	9·54	162
Sonajuli	118	180	3	16	19	2·54	8·88	11·12	146
Rupatal	165	125	3	7	10	1·81	5·60	7·41	...
Bhergaon	140	130	2	10	12	1·42	7·69	9·11	18

One of these gardens, Daputa, appeared on the unhealthy list last year. The Civil Surgeon should be directed to inspect all these gardens, and his inspection reports should in due course be transmitted to the Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts, who will take such action in each case as may seem necessary.

Unhealthy gardens in Nowgong

54. The number of unhealthy gardens in Nowgong was two, as in the preceding year:—

Name of garden.	Mean strength.		Deaths.			Ratio per mille.			Deaths among Act labourers.	
	First half-year.	Second half-year.	First half year.	Second half-year.	Total.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Annual.	Number.	Ratio per mille.
Palkhoi	181	187	5	12	17	27·6	64·1	91·7	6	117·6
Ôwguri	158	160	4	26	30	25·3	162·5	187·8	8	138·1
Total of unhealthy gardens.	339	347	9	38	47	26·5	109·5	136·0	...	...
Total of District ..	13,044	13,610	281	242	523	21·5	17·7	39·2	...	...
Balance, *i.e.*, healthy gardens.	12,705	13,263	272	204	476	21·4	15·3	36·7	...	...

The following table shows the causes of deaths :—

Name of garden.	Cholera.	Dysentery.	Fever.	Dropsy.	Anæmia.	Other causes.	Total.
Palkhoi	...	3	8	...	...	6	17
Owguri	...	19	3	1	3	4	30
Total	...	22	11	1	3	10	47

Of these two gardens, Palkhoi was also on the unhealthy list last year and in 1885. The Deputy-Commissioner reports as follows:—

"*Palkhoi.*—Details regarding this garden were given in Chapter VIII. of the Immigration Report for 1887 at length. This garden is worked both by Act and non-Act labourers. The death-rate on this garden among Act coolies was 11·76 in 1888 (6 on average of 51), against 17·96 in 1887. The number of both classes of labourers, Act and non-Act, at the beginning and end of 1888 has been shown in the Statement (A) appended herewith.* This garden imported very few coolies during 1888. The number of free coolies seems to be increasing. The death-rate is high among both the classes,—Act 11·76 (6 on average 51), non-Act 8·18 (11 on average 133). After the Civil Medical Officer had inspected the garden on the 28th September 1887 (a copy of his remarks was attached to the Immigration Report for 1887), the attention of the Manager and the Calcutta Agents was drawn to his suggestions. On the 16th November 1888, this garden was inspected by the Civil Medical Officer ; and the remarks made by him on that occasion are re-produced below :—

" 'The water-supply is from the small stream that passes just below the lines ; water abundant, bricks have been burnt, and a well is being sunk near the lines to provide a drinking water-supply. The Manager states that a pump is being procured. * * * The medical officer was stated to be a compounder. A man of this status does not sufficiently satisfy the requirements of Rule 122. A Hospital-Assistant with a diploma is necessary for Palkhoi and Kuthori Gardens combined.'

* STATEMENT A

Name of garden.		Population. 1st January	1st July.	31st December.	Average. 1st half.	2nd half.	Number of deaths. 1st half.	2nd half.	Total.	Percentage of deaths 1st half.	2nd half.	Total.	Total average. 1st half.	2nd half.	Total deaths. 1st half	2nd half.	Total.	Total percentage of deaths. 1st half.	2nd half.	Total.
Palkhoi	Act.....	51	51	51	51	51	2	4	6	3 92	7 84	11 76	121	187	5	12	17	2 76	6 41	9·17
	Non Act	109	151	121	130	136	3	8	11	2 30	5 88	8 18								
Owguri ..	Act	53	62	55	57	58	1	7	8	1 75	12 06	13 81	158	160	4	26	30	2 53	16 25	18 78
	Non Act	93	109	94	100	101	3	19	22	3	18 81	21 81								
Total of unhealthy gardens....		305	373	321	339	347	9	38	47	2 65	10 95	13 60	339	347	9	38	47	2 65	10 95	13·60
Total of District.		12 250	13,859	13,482	13,014	13 610	261	212	523	2 15	1 77	3 92	13,044	13,610	261	242	523	2 15	1 77	3 92
Balance		11,945	13,486	13,061	12,705	12,263	272	204	476	2 14	1·53	3 67	12,705	13,263	272	204	476	2 14	1 53	3 67

Name of garden		Cholera.	Dysentery.	Fever.	Bronchitis.	Dropsy.	Diarrhœa.	Debility.	Pneumonia.	Anæmia	Infantile disease.	Child birth.	Bowel-complaint	Other causes.	Total.
Palkhoi	Act	.	3	3					..		..	.	.	1	6
	Non-Act	..	.	6			1	..	.		..	..	1	3	11
Owguri	Act		5	. .	..	.	.	.		3		..		1	8
	Non Act		1	2		1	..				..	..	..		23
	Total	..	22	11	.	1	1	..		3	..	..	1	3	47

"The Manager was directed to comply with these suggestions within two months. I have been now informed that the well will be shortly ready for use, and that a medical man with a diploma has been put in charge of this factory and Kuthori. It will appear that every possible effort has been made to comply with the Civil Medical Officer's remarks, and I have acquainted the Commissioner with the facts in this office letter No. 503 of 12th February 1889. I shall again depute the Civil Medical Officer to make a thorough inspection of this garden; and should he find the death-rate still heavy, I shall consider the propriety of holding a committee on it under Section 130 of the Act.

"*Owguri.*—This garden is worked both by Act and non-Act labourers. It appeared in the unhealthy list of 1884, 1883, and 1882. Since 1884, it made some improvement in regard to the health of the coolies. The death-rate for the last four years is:—

"1884	Act	14·77	1885	Act	2·78
	Non-Act	9·51		Non-Act	2·41
"1886	Act	6·55	1887	Act	12·53
	Non-Act	2·92		Non-Act	1·75

"Finding the death-rate among Act coolies in 1887 very heavy,—being 12·53,—I deputed the Civil Medical Officer to make a thorough inspection of this garden; he accordingly inspected it on the 31st August 1887. The remarks made by him were sent to the Manager, who was also a part-proprietor, to give them his early attention. The Commissioner of the Assam Valley Districts, in returning the Inspection Report of that garden, stated, in his letter No. 5,851, dated 30th December 1887, that he was very sorry that the death-rate in this garden was increasing. In July 1888, the Civil Medical Officer was again deputed to visit this garden. The remarks made by him on this occasion are herewith reproduced:—

"'*State of Lines.*—There is one group of huts on the side of a hill, space for which has been formed by cutting the bank,—not the best position. The bank of earth at back should be largely cut away and the earth thrown in front, and the back of the huts well drained. This is important. Elevation good; drainage good. There is a second set of old lines on the bank of the Killing River, the elevation of which is not good. Some portion is liable to floods. Drainage sufficient.

"'*Water-supply.*—There is an old well, but it is quite unused. The water-supply is from the Killing River. Water abundant. Not more liable to contamination than any such river with a swift flowing stream close to the houses, it would be difficult to try and insist upon the coolies using well-water. However, the new line coolies would use well-water if a good well, properly fitted with pump and cistern with taps, was provided; one good well would be sufficient for all.'

"A copy of the above remarks was sent to the Manager. At the time of this inspection (which took place on 31st July 1888 and since the previous inspection, which was held on 31st August 1887), there had been only 4 deaths on an average,—57 Act coolies, or 7·01 per cent.; and 3 among 98 non-Act coolies, or 3·06 per cent.; but, since this inspection, the number of deaths among Act coolies rose before the end of the year to 8, and among non-Act to 22, among which were many cases of dysentery. I shall depute the Civil Medical Officer shortly to again visit this garden to ascertain the cause of this mortality and report what has been done to remedy defects already pointed out, and shall report results, with the steps taken by me, in due course."

In addition to the above, the following list is given of gardens on which there were ten or more deaths amongst Act labourers, and the death-rate among such labourers exceeded 7 per cent., during 1888:—

Name of garden.	Population.			Average.		Number of deaths.			Percentage of deaths.		
	1st January.	1st July.	31st December.	1st half.	2nd half.	1st half.	2nd half.	Total.	1st half.	2nd half.	Total.
Amlokhi	120	145	239	132	192	7	4	11	5·30	2·08	7·38
Rangamati	151	113	203	132	158	6	6	12	4·54	3·79	8·33

Both these gardens were inspected during the year either by the Deputy-Commissioner or by the Civil Surgeon. They, and also Palkhoi and Owguri, should be again inspected by the Civil Surgeon, and the inspection reports should be forwarded to the Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts, who will decide what further steps (if any) are necessary.

Unhealthy gardens in Sibságar

55. There were 21 unhealthy gardens in Sibságar in 1888, against 10 in the past year :—

Sub division.	Name of garden	Mean strength.		Deaths.			Ratio per mille.			Deaths among Act labourers.	
		First half-year.	Second half-year.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Total.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Annual.	Number.	Ratio per mille.
Sadr	Taukak	374	446	29	29	58	77·5	65·0	142·5	27	92·9
	Teok	361	363	13	17	30	36·0	46·8	82·8	16	129·5
	Borsilla	659	737	30	22	52	45·5	29·8	75·3	19	82·3
	Borbam	491	557	18	25	43	36·6	44·8	81·4	29	100·5
Jorhát	Seleng	1,192	1,221	46	157	203	38·5	128·5	167·0	83	193·4
	Gabruparbat	554	475	17	22	39	30·6	46·3	76·9	25	89·1
	Bheluguri	245	290	8	12	20	32·6	41·3	73·9	8	60·5
	Naginijan	314	573	14	15	29	44·5	26·1	70·6	12	104·3
	Holonguri	714	727	24	36	60	33·6	49·5	83·1	21	89·7
	Dehingapar	492	521	17	42	59	34·5	80·6	115·1	21	89·7
	Katalguri	594	595	37	11	48	62·2	18·4	80·6	15	91·0
	Mariani	886	893	108	16	124	121·8	17·9	139·7	58	247·7
	Dhodurpar	130	142	8	8	16	61·5	56·3	117·8	12	141·8
	Kaliapani	187	207	24	11	35	128·3	53·1	181·4	12	206·6
	Noábári	372	344	58	13	71	155·9	37·7	193·6	25	296·8
	Mazenga	281	335	11	15	26	39·1	44·7	83·8	16	80·3
	Hilikha	713	763	9	51	60	12·6	66·8	79·4	33	110·9
	Hatichungi	439	444	28	13	41	63·7	29·2	92·9	23	94·4
	Chungi	400	388	21	15	36	52·5	38·6	91·1	14	161·0
	Moaband	1,409	1,499	96	28	124	68·1	18·6	86·7	66	88·8
Golághát	Bihora	237	278	24	8	32	101·2	28·7	129·9	12	133·4
	Total of unhealthy gardens	11,044	11,798	640	566	1,206	57·9	47·9	105·8	...	.....
	Total of District ...	77,206	80,468	1,779	1,890	3,669	23·0	23·5	46·5	...	.....
	Balance, *i.e.*, healthy gardens.	66,162	68,670	1,139	1,324	2,463	17·2	19·2	36·4	...	.....

The following table shows the causes of deaths on the above gardens:—

Sub-division.	Name of garden.	Cholera.	Dysentery.	Fever.	Dropsy.	Anæmia.	Other causes.	Total.
Sadr ...	Taukak	1	19	4	4	...	30	58
	Teok	6	15	...	...	...	9	30
	Borsilla	6	12	6	...	..	28	52
	Borbam	25	2	4	...	...	12	43
Jorhát ...	Seleng	122	28	11	6	...	36	203
	Gabruparbat	4	8	2	2	...	23	39
	Bheluguri	1	8	2	2	...	7	20
	Naginijan	11	11	1	1	...	5	29
	Holonguri	4	14	1	8	...	33	60
	Dehingapar	3	18	3	5	...	30	59
	Katalguri	38	4	...	1	...	5	48
	Mariani	106	8	1	4	...	5	124
	Dhodurpar	8	1	...	1	...	6	16
	Kaliapani	21	1	2	2	...	9	35
	Noabari	55	1	2	3	...	10	71
	Mazenga	8	9	4	...	...	5	26
	Hilikha	3	9	...	1	...	47	60
	Hatichungi	11	13	1	3	...	13	41
	Chungi	20	15	1	...	...	...	36
	Moaband	82	19	9	6	...	8	124
Golághát ...	Bihora	12	14	...	1	...	5	32
	Total ...	547	229	54	50	...	326	1,206

The Deputy-Commissioner reports—

"From the last column of this formidable list it will be seen that if cholera deaths be excluded, the number of unhealthy gardens will be reduced to 7, the number last year was 10. Furthermore, it will be observed that in Golághát there is only one garden, in the sadr there are 4 (but if cholera deaths be excluded, there is only one). In Jorhát there are 16 (which become 5 if cholera deaths be excluded). Excluding deaths from a special cause (cholera epidemic), the unhealthy gardens are—

Taukak	13·9	per mille.
Bhelaguri	70·3	"
Holonguri	75·	"
Dehingapar	109·8	"
Kaliapani	71·7	"
Hilikha	78·	"
Bihora	80·	"

"These figures are excessive only in two cases, *viz.*, Taukak and Dehingapar. Out of these 21 unhealthy gardens, the following 7 appeared on the unhealthy lists of the previous seven years, as noted against each:—

Borbain	1884
Seleng	1887
Gabruparbat	1881, 1883
Naginijan	1884
Dehingapar	1884, 1885, 1886.
Hilikha	1882
Hatichungi	1886, 1887.

"Of these 7 gardens, only Dehingapar and Hilikha would remain on the black list if deaths from cholera were excluded. Although Dehingapar showed some improvement in 1887, it relapsed into its former state of unhealthiness during the last year. Within a year's time two committees have been held on this garden, *viz.*, one in December 1887 and another, a special one, in December 1888. The Assistant-Commissioner of Jorhát reports that the manager is now doing all in his power to carry out the recommendations of the Committee, and that he has already made considerable improvements, and that these new works will probably be completed by the middle of April, and that they are bound to have a beneficial effect on the health of the garden. The manager has had many warnings, and has been dilatory, but now sees his danger. The deaths among Act coolies were 89 per mille, while they were 115 per mille, calculated on the whole labour force, that is to say, the non-Act coolies died in greater number than the Act labourers. But Act I. of 1882, Sections 128 and 130, empower us to act only in the interest of 'labourers,' so that the result will be, if we take action, to prevent 8 per cent. Act labourers from dying while we permit 11 per cent. free labourers to die. This result is rather anomalous. Of the 10 unhealthy gardens in 1887, the Civil Surgeon inspected all but one. That one was Kachomari, which I inspected myself, and, as all 'labourers' had been removed from it and all improvements ordered carried out, there was no need for the Civil Surgeon to inspect."

Of the seven gardens which would be classed as unhealthy if cholera were excluded, Taukak was inspected on the 14th June 1889 by the Civil Surgeon, who recorded the following remarks:—

"There have been 28 deaths in this garden since the last inspection.* Of these, 20 occurred among 'agreement coolies' and 8 among dependents. The principal causes of mortality were dysentery and dropsy.

* 28th September 1888.

"There were 10 deaths from dysentery. These occurred mostly among the new coolies, who live in the dirty old lines near the bank of the river, and most probably drink the river water against the order of the manager.

"There were 8 deaths from dropsy. In six cases the disease was the result of previous dysentery or diarrhœa. The remaining two were probably cases of *beri-beri*, but these were not diagnosed properly, owing to the ignorance of the native doctor regarding this new disease. I have carefully explained to him the nature, symptoms, and treatment of this disease.

"The sanitary defects noted were—

"(*a*) The unhealthy conditions of the old lines. These should be pulled down as soon as possible.

"(*b*) Many men still go to the river to drink the water. This should be put a stop to. The well-water is excellent.

"(*c*) Vegetable gardens should be started as soon as possible. There have already been two deaths from scurvy in the garden.

"A new hospital is most urgently required. During my inspection I found that the poisonous and the non-poisonous drugs were kept in the same almirah. I have ordered the native doctor to keep these separately under lock and key. The hospital register was not properly kept. The diseases were entered in it very carelessly. I have ordered that a nomenclature of diseases should be purchased at once and diseases entered according to same."

In view of the above remarks and of the results generally, it is clear that the garden should be carefully watched.

Bheluguri was inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 19th June 1889, and the sanitary arrangements were found satisfactory, with the exception of a few defects, which were pointed out. There had been no epidemic since the last inspection, in August 1888, and the general condition of the garden was found to be healthy.

Holonguri was inspected on the 20th June 1889 by the Civil Surgeon, who found that 36 deaths had occurred since the last inspection (12th August 1888), of which the majority were due to dysentery and diarrhœa, caused most probably by drinking bad water. *Pucca* wells are said to be the most urgent requirement of this garden.

Dehingapar was also inspected on the 20th June 1889 by the Civil Surgeon, who wrote—

"The garden was reported unhealthy during the last* inspection, and the manager stated that the high mortality was 'due to an epidemic which broke out among the infants and young children,' &c. On making enquiries regarding this epidemic, I found that during the months of July, August, September, and October 1888, bowel-complaints and measles were prevalent among the children in an epidemic form; the former as sequel to the latter. This form of measles (complicated with dysentery, diarrhœa, and convulsions) was present on other gardens at the time. Measles commenced at Dehingapar about the 10th of July, and lasted till the 25th of October. The disease was probably contracted from the neighbouring gardens, or at the *hât*, and the complications, namely, dysentery, diarrhœa, and convulsions and lung diseases were due to heat or other climatic influences. There were 4 deaths from measles (from lung complications such as pneumonia and capillary bronchitis), 11 from diarrhœa and 6 from dysentery, total number of deaths being 21, all most probably the result of complications following an attack of measles.

* 11th January 1889.

"The garden is at present healthy. The arrangements for good water are still very defective. There is no hospital, consequently the hospital appliances as prescribed in Rule 125 are also wanting."

Though from Dr. Banerji's report the excessive mortality in Dehingapar during the year under report would seem to have arisen from what may be in a certain sense termed accidental causes, it is impossible to regard otherwise than with suspicion a garden which has within five years been four times in the black list, and accordingly this garden should be carefully watched.

Kaliapani was inspected by the Civil Surgeon on the 21st June 1889, and the sanitary arrangements were found to be satisfactory, with the exception that a *pucca* well for drinking-water was urgently required, and that the resident native doctor was found to be inefficient.

Hilikha was inspected on the 22nd June 1889 by the Civil Surgeon, who reported as follows:—

"The garden was reported unhealthy last year, owing to an outbreak of *beri-beri* or coolie anæmia. The following brief information was gathered on the subject during my inspection of the garden:—

History and symptoms, &c.

"*Beri-beri.*—The disease appeared chiefly among the new jungly coolies (Mundahs and Urangs) recruited from Ranchi, Lohardugga, and Dumka. These people are generally very dirty in their habits. They eat all sorts of filth, even dead and diseased cows and dogs, and they never bathe. The disease commenced, or was recognized, in or about the middle of November last. Almost all the deaths occurred during the month of December. The deaths included 10 women and 11 men.

"The disease was diagnosed as 'epidemic dysentery' by the native doctor, and treated accordingly with opium, ipecac, &c., with the most disastrous results. The symptoms noticed were pale white tongue and eyelids and lips, and loss of strength, small and black and bloody stools, no mucus. Gradually dropsy set in and carried off the patient.

"The disease was not properly diagnosed till the beginning of December, when Dr. Norville, of Dibrugarh, came on a visit to this garden. He went to hospital to see the cases, which he at once diagnosed as cases of acute *beri beri*. On his recommendation, the treatment was changed, and though all the advanced cases of the disease died, the rest, numbering over one hundred, recovered completely under *thymol* treatment. It is very probable that if the disease had been diagnosed in time, there would have been no deaths.

Parasite.

"Colour generally dirty white, a few red, size from half inch to one inch. Body slightly curved at one end. They came out in crowds.

Contagiousness.

"It is contagious where people eat together, sleep together, rear in the same place, and wear the same cloths. In the case of coolie Madu, and also in that of Bagirat, the whole family, including father, mother, and children, was swept off. The disease did not spread from hut to hut.

"The manager, as well as the doctor, says that the disease was brought in an incipient form (dyspeptic stage) by the jungly coolies into the garden. The disease spread among the coolies, owing to proper sanitary precautions not having been taken in time, such as isolation of sick persons and proper burial of excreta. These were not done, simply because the disease was not diagnosed in time.

"The present sanitary arrangements of the garden are satisfactory. I have asked the manager to send to the Chemical Examiner in Calcutta samples of tank and well-water for analysis."

The report of the Civil Surgeon's inspection of Bihora has not been received.

Unhealthy gardens in Lakhimpur.

56. The following list shows 17 unhealthy gardens in Lakhimpur, against 15 in the previous year: –

	Name of garden.	Mean strength.		Deaths.			Ratio per mille.			Deaths among Act labourers.	
		First half-year.	Second half-year.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Total.	First half-year.	Second half-year.	Annual.	Number.	Ratio per mille.
Dibrugarh.	Nappa	166	177	10	7	17	60·2	39·5	99·7	15	175·1
	Bangpara (Chota)	126	133	8	4	12	63·4	30·0	93·4	9	185·4
	Hukanpukri	535	550	18	22	40	33·6	40·0	73·6	34	139·1
	Blackburn	368	366	16	20	36	43·4	54·6	98·0	13	99·4
	Hugriján	739	753	35	27	62	47·3	35·8	83·1	46	118·3
	Nahartoli	572	556	22	18	40	38·4	32·3	70·7	15	80·4
	Phukanbari	108	96	2	9	11	18·5	93·7	112·2	2	63·8
	Sealkati and Ridgeway	699	727	33	33	66	47·2	45·8	92·5	45	143·6
	Singlijan	307	332	8	17	25	26·0	51·2	77·2	16	114·9
	Oaklands	425	383	25	27	52	58·8	70·4	129·2	44	199·4
	Mesaijan	678	509	26	51	77	38·3	100·1	138·4	46	238·4
	Samdang	369	357	13	17	30	35·2	47·6	82·8	24	309·5
	Titademaru	315	325	13	13	26	41·2	40·0	81·2	14	99·8
	Naharani	361	402	12	17	29	33·2	42·2	75·4	6	101·6
North Lakhimpur.	Hulmari	584	602	22	26	48	37·6	43·1	80·7	26	96·6
	Dirju	1,255	1,409	64	79	143	50·9	56·6	106·9	71	99·2
	Bordeobam	322	313	7	21	28	21·7	67·0	88·7	14	135·5
	Total of unhealthy gardens	7,929	7,990	334	408	742	42·1	51·0	93·1	...	...
	Total of district	57,461	60,100	1,393	1,498	2,891	24·2	24·9	49·1	...	...
	Balance, *i.e.*, healthy gardens	49,532	52,110	1,059	1,090	2,149	21·3	20·9	42·2	...	...

The following table shows the causes of deaths in these gardens:—

	Name of garden.	Cholera.	Dysentery.	Fever.	Dropsy.	Anchylostomiasis.	Other causes.	Total.
Dibrugarh.	Nappa	2	3	...	2	7	3	17
	Bangpara (Chota)	1	2	2	1	4	2	12
	Hukanpukri	5	11	3	6	9	6	40
	Blackburn	6	9	2	...	10	9	36
	Hugrijan	18	9	12	1	...	22	62
	Nahartoli	6	15	...	9	...	10	40
	Phukanbári	..	.....	2	...	...	9	11
	Sealkati and Ridgeway.	8	10	4	7	...	37	66
	Singlijan	6	9	4	3	...	3	25
	Oaklands	17	6	2	13	7	7	52
	Mesaijan	.....	1	5	...	43	28	77
	Samdang	10	8	3	3	3	3	30
	Titademaru	2	12	3	4	...	5	26
	Naharani	1	8	4	2	...	14	29
North Lakhimpur.	Hulmari	11	2	6	5	4	20	48
	Dirju	27	56	13	25	...	22	143
	Bordeobam	4	9	1	10	...	4	28
	Total	124	170	66	91	87	204	742

The Deputy-Commissioner reports :—

"These are the gardens which the Civil Surgeon is obliged to report on, but we have been without an officer till recently. Dr. Daly, who joined in March, has not yet had time to become acquainted with his duties as garden inspector, and his report on these gardens will be submitted later. The list of unhealthy gardens for 1888 is a long one, 17 gardens against 15 in 1887. Two of the 17 were on the list of 1887, namely, Samdang in the sadr sub-division and Hulmari in North Lakhimpur. The other 13 gardens of the 1887 list, I am glad to say, have improved considerably, and are not now unhealthy. All the 15 gardens of 1887 were thoroughly and minutely inspected, the more important ones by me, and in each case I sent a special report. Of the 1888 list, the two worst are Mesaijan and Samdang. That Mesaijan came on the black list is entirely due to mismanagement and ill-treatment of the labourers. The Assistant Manager was convicted of flogging certain labourers, and was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for a term of 10 months, and to pay a fine of Rs. 450. The fine was realised, and the offender is now undergoing his sentence of imprisonment. The manager was dismissed by the proprietors, and the native staff entirely changed. This garden was visited by the Chief Commissioner in March. I accompanied him, and found that great improvements had been made, and that all my orders and suggestions had been carried out or were being enforced. I have no doubt Mesaijan will prove a healthy garden under its changed aspect during the current year. Samdang was also visited by the Chief Commissioner. In this garden the manager has entirely neglected to carry out the orders given at my last inspection. I have allowed him till the end of March, when I shall again visit the estate, and shall then take whatever measures may seem necessary. Samdang has been the subject of special report. I am glad the Chief Commissioner has had the opportunity of visiting our two worst gardens. I think he will see that the inspecting officers do all in their power to improve the state of bad gardens, and I do not think many managers will be found so utterly indifferent to orders given for the welfare of the labourers as the manager of Samdang.* All the unhealthy gardens will, as I have said, be visited and reported on by the Civil Surgeon, and I shall myself thoroughly inspect as many of them as I possibly can do

* See further as to Samdang the later reports *infra*

"But, irrespective of the unhealthy gardens technically so called, there are several gardens in this district with a death-rate exceeding 7 per cent. amongst Act coolies alone during the past three years, namely, (1) Bishakupi, (2) Chawulkhowa, (3) Romari, (4) Hukanguri, (5) the Assam Railways and Trading Company, Limited, (6), Sepon, (7) Jaipur Balimara, (8) Solonibari, while Dum Duma, a very large garden with 2,000 labourers, has had a death-rate of over 10 per cent. for the last two years amongst Act coolies, but amongst non-Act a death-rate of 3·60 in 1887 and only 2·02 in 1888. These gardens will, of course, be watched and carefully inspected this year, but in most of them, Dum Duma for instance, the drinking-water and sanitary arrangements are all that could be desired, and it is in medical charge of a European doctor resident on the garden.

"I may state here that no Committees were held in the past year in this district. I think that in the generality of cases, if prompt and strong measures are taken by the Deputy-Commissioner and Inspector after a thorough and minute inspection, it is scarcely necessary to hold a Committee. If a garden is really unhealthy owing to mismanagement, and if it comes within the purview of Section 130 of the Act, it should be closed by the Chief Commissioner without a Committee."

In addition to the above, the following table is given of gardens on which there were ten or more deaths amongst Act labourers or non-Act labourers, and the death rate among such labourers exceeded 7 per cent. during 1888:—

	Names of gardens	Act coolies							Non-Act coolies.						
		Mean strength.		Deaths.		Percentage.		Annual.	Mean strength		Deaths.		Percentage		Annual.
		First half	Second half.	First half.	Second half.	First half	Second half.		First half.	Second half.	First half.	Second half.	First half.	Second half.	
1	Rohomaria (Eastern Assam Tea Company).	86	115	5	3	5 81	2 60	8 41	165	194	2	...	1 21	...	1 21
2.	Dokambari (Wilton Tea Company.	52	59	2	5	3·84	8 47	12·31	332	348	8	5	90	1 43	2 33
3	Dum Duma.....	643	719	33	37	5·13	5 14	10 27	1,150	1,223	13	11	1 13	·89	2·02
4.	Bishakupi	481	504	30	17	6 23	3·37	9 60	749	776	12	18	1 60	2 31	3 91
5.	Sealkati and Ridgeway	303	322	20	25	6·60	7 76	14 36	396	405	13	8	3 28	1 97	5·25
6.	Chaukidingi (Dibru Company)	80	99	4	5	5 00	5 05	10·05	275	264	5	2	1 81	·75	2·56
7	Nappa (Jokai Assam Tea Company).	86	85	9	6	10 46	7·05	17 51	80	92	1	1	1 25	1 08	2 33
8.	Jokai (Jokai Assam Tea Co.)	71	83	3	4	4 22	4 81	9 03	227	200	...	6	...	2 30	2 30
9	Chawulkhowa (Jokai Assam Tea Company)	70	69	2	4	2 85	5 79	8 64	134	144	6	1	4 47	·69	5 16
10.	Romari (Jokai Assam Tea Company).	246	248	9	13	3·65	5 24	8·89	494	525	5	4	1 01	76	1 77
11.	Singhjan	116	153	5	11	4·31	7 18	11·49	190	179	3	6	1 57	3 35	4·92
12.	Medla	51	48	1	4	1 96	8 33	10·29	194	187	4	1	2 06	5.3	2 59
13	Talup	1,019	1,111	60	39	5 88	3 51	9 39	2,244	2,273	25	22	1 11	·96	2·07
14	Hukanguri	506	562	28	37	5·53	6 58	12·11	998	1,052	13	12	1 30	1 14	2 44
15.	Hukanpukri	238	248	12	22	5 04	8·87	13·91	296	302	6	...	2 02	...	2·02
16.	Khanikar	152	167	1	11	·65	6·58	7 23	369	386	11	6	2·98	1·55	4 53

Names of gardens.	Act coolies.							Non-Act coolies.						
	Mean strength.		Deaths.		Percentage.			Mean strength.		Deaths.		Percentage.		
	First half.	Second half.	First half.	Second half.	First half.	Second half.	Annual.	First half.	Second half.	First half.	Second half.	First half.	Second half.	Annual.
17. Blackburn	125	136	6	7	4 80	5 14	9·94	243	230	10	13	4·11	5 65	9 76
18. Oaklands	226	217	18	26	7 96	11 98	19 94	199	166	7	1	3·51	·60	4 11
19. Balijan	276	296	9	12	3 26	4·05	7 31	277	283	..	6	...	2·12	2 12
20. Mesaijan	225	178	17	29	7·55	16·29	23·84	453	330	9	22	1·98	6·66	8 64
21. Samdang	83	74	10	14	12 04	18 91	30 95	285	283	3	3	1·05	1·06	2 11
22. Hugrijan	362	430	26	20	7 18	4 65	11 83	377	323	9	7	2 38	2·16	4 54
23. Nahortoli	200	182	4	11	2·00	6·04	8 04	372	371	18	7	4·83	1·87	6·70
24. Titademaru	132	147	6	8	4·54	5 44	9 98	183	177	7	5	3 82	2 82	6 64
25. Phukanbari	29	34	1	1	3 44	2·94	6·38	79	61	1	8	1·26	13 11	14·37
26. Rajábheta	43	43	4	2	9·30	4 65	13·95	150	141	4	1	2·66	·70	3 36
27. Bogpara (Jokai Assam Tea Company).	50	44	7	2	14·00	4 54	18·54	76	89	1	2	1·31	2 24	3 55
28. Assam Railway and Trading Company.	959	983	35	46	3 64	4 67	8·31	908	807	24	13	2 64	1·61	4·25
29. Sepon	187	210	13	6	6·95	2 85	9 80	300	318	9	5	3 00	1·57	4 57
30. Barbam	60	37	...	3		8 10	8 10	448	571	11	13	2·45	2·27	4·72
31. Naharani	51	70	3	3	5 88	4 28	10·16	310	332	9	14	2·90	4 21	7 11
32. Balimara (Jaipur)	391	439	23	13	5·88	2 96	8 84	371	406	1	2	26	·49	·75
33. Hulmari	267	270	9	17	3 37	6 29	9 66	317	332	13	9	4 10	2·71	6·81
34. Dirju	659	768	32	39	4 85	5·07	9 92	596	641	32	40	5·36	6·24	11·60
35. Dulabat	335	398	13	17	3·88	4 27	8 15	500	547	8	18	1 60	3 29	4·89
36. Selonibari	211	232	4	8	1·89	3·44	5·33	120	148	1	11	·83	7 43	8 26
37. Bordeobam	105	103	2	12	1·90	11·65	13·55	217	210	5	9	2·30	4 28	6 58

Of the gardens shown in the preceding table, the following had ten or more deaths amongst Act or non-Act labourers, and the mortality rate among such labourers exceeded 7 per cent. during the year 1887:—

Names of gardens.	Act coolies.							Non-Act coolies.						
	Mean strength.		Deaths.		Percentage.			Mean strength.		Deaths.		Percentage.		
	First half.	Second half.	First half.	Second half.	First half.	Second half.	Annual.	First half.	Second half.	First half.	Second half.	First half.	Second half.	Annual.
1. Dum Duma	513	533	32	21	6·23	3·93	10 16	1,006	1,045	19	18	1 88	1·72	3 60
2. Bishakupi	435	460	19	20	4·36	4·34	8 70	687	711	11	11	1 60	1·54	3 14
3. Sealkati	195	245	8	13	4·10	5·30	9 40	386	392	7	4	1·81	1·02	2·83
4. Jokai	96	70	2	4	2·08	5 71	7·79	249	232	7	6	2·81	2·58	5·39
5. Romari (Jokai Assam Tea Company.)	269	274	13	9	4 83	3·28	8·11	579	512	7	7	1·20	1·36	2·56
6. Hukanguri	397	475	73	19	18·38	4·00	22·38	900	937	29	7	6 22	74	3 96
7. Mesaijan	224	259	5	19	2·23	7 33	9 56	393	431	...	7	...	1·62	1·62
8. Samdang	94	82	3	4	3·19	4·87	8·06	252	267	10	10	3·96	3·74	7·70
9. Titademaru	88	108	5	5	5 68	4·62	10 30	168	187	3	2	1 78	1 06	2·84
10. Assam Railway and Trading Company.	1,040	1,059	26	54	2 50	5·09	7·59	654	864	21	31	3 21	3·58	6·79
11. Hukanpukri	219	227	16	14	7·30	6·16	13·46	304	306	3	4	·98	1 30	2·28
12. Sepon	144	165	3	9	2·08	5·45	7·53	245	263	4	11	1 63	4 18	5 81
13 Naharani	61	30	1	2	1 63	6·66	8·29	269	283	7	6	2 60	2 12	4·72
14. Balimara (Jaipur)	324	365	23	17	7·09	4 65	11 74	231	301	1	8	·43	2 65	3·08
15 Hulmari	254	255	10	16	3·93	6 27	10 20	318	310	13	16	4·08	5 16	9·24
16. Dirju	610	632	16	16	2·62	2·53	5·15	585	582	19	23	3·24	3·95	7·19
17. Dulabát	287	300	7	12	2·43	4·00	6·43	490	498	14	21	2 85	4 21	7·06
18. Bordeobam	71	89	...	2	..	2 24	2 24	235	224	5	14	2·12	6·25	8 37
19. Selonibari	204	212	12	10	5·88	4·71	10·59	109	114	3	4	2 75	3 50	6 2[illegible]

Of the 17 unhealthy gardens, 12 have been inspected by the Civil Surgeon since the Deputy-Commissioner's report was received, and five (Phukanbari and Naharani in the sadr sub-division and the three unhealthy gardens in the North Lakhimpur division) have still to be inspected. The Civil Surgeon's report on these five gardens is awaited by the Chief Commissioner. A special report was also called for by the Chief Commissioner, and

has been submitted on the Dum Duma garden, which, though not on the unhealthy list, had a death-rate of over 10 per cent. both in 1887 and 1888 amongst Act labourers. The work of inspection was much interfered with owing to the fact that there was no separate Civil Surgeon in the district between December 1888 and March 1889, during which interval the Civil Surgeon's work had to be performed by the Military Medical Officer at Dibrugarh.

As regards the twelve gardens on the unhealthy list which were inspected, the Civil Surgeon's report, with the remarks recorded upon it by the Deputy-Commissioner, are appended :—

" The total number of unhealthy gardens this year has been seventeen. Fourteen of these are in the sadr district and three in the North Lakhimpur sub-district. Of those in the sadr district, I have inspected twelve. Those in North Lakhimpur I have been unable to inspect. Phukanbari and Naharani have not been inspected by me (both in the sadr division).

* * * * *

" *Nappa.*—During the year there were 17 deaths in all, 15 being adult Act coolies, 1 non Act adult, and 1 child. The death-rate among Act coolies was 17·51 per cent., among non-Act the percentage was 2·33 per cent. The deaths were due to cholera 2, dysentery 3, dropsy 2, anchylostomiasis 7, other causes 3. The two cases of dropsy should most probably be included under anchylostomiasis, which would give to that disease nine deaths, or more than 50 per cent. of the total mortality. In other words, the unhealthiness of the garden is due to this disease, but until the causation of this disease is more thoroughly understood, it will be difficult to point out the measures which must be taken to prevent it. I inspected this garden on 23rd April 1889, but was unable to detect any sanitary defect.

" *Bangpara.*—Total mortality 12; Act adults 9, non-Act adults *nil*, children 3. Death-rate, Act 18·51 per cent., non-Act 3·55 per cent. Principal diseases, cholera 1, dysentery 2, fever 2, dropsy 1, anchylostomiasis 1, other causes 2. Here again, if, as is probably correct, the dropsy cases be included with those of anchylostomiasis, the mortality from this disease will be 5 out of a total of 12, or 41 per cent. I inspected this garden on 1st May 1889, and found no sanitary defect except that the huts are not raised on plinths.

" *Hukanpukri.*—Total mortality 40, Act adults 34, non-Act adults 3, children 3. Death-rate, Act coolies 13·91 per cent., non-Act coolies 2·02 per cent.; causes of death, cholera 5, dysentery 11, fever 3, dropsy 6, anchylostomiasis 9, other causes 6. On this garden the death-rate from anchylostomiasis, including dropsy cases, is 37·5 per cent. I inspected the garden on 11th May 1889, and found that some of the huts are not raised on plinths, and that the site is rather low. The huts therefore require to be well raised on plinths.

" *Hugrijan.*—Total mortality 62, Act coolie adults 46, non-Act adults 4, children 12. Death-rate, Act 11·83 per cent., non-Act 4·54 per cent. Principal diseases, cholera 18, dysentery 9, fever 12, dropsy 1, anchylostominsis *nil*, other causes 22. The fact that there has been only one death from dropsy and none from anchylostominsis is worthy of notice. Cholera caused 29 per cent. of all deaths. I inspected the garden on the 23rd May 1889, and found it in good sanitary condition."

This garden was inspected by the Deputy-Commissioner, and he remarks—

" This is one of the unhealthy gardens of 1888. I have visited it. The arrangements are good. There is a capital hotel, where nearly 200 coolies get really good food. The bulk of the deaths occurred early in 1888, and thus rendered the garden unhealthy. Since the last inspection the garden has been more healthy, and I anticipate better results this year, as the care and management is all that can be desired."

" *Blackburn.*—Total deaths 36, Act adults 13, non-Act adults 7, children 16. Death-rate, Act 9·94 per cent., non-Act 9·76 per cent. Principal diseases, cholera 6, dysentery 9, fever 2, dropsy *nil*, anchylostomiasis 10, other causes 9. Deaths from anchylostomiasis are 26 per cent. of the total. The large number of deaths among the children is noticeable. They appear to have died principally from diarrhœa, dysentery, and anchylostomiasis. I inspected the garden on 26th April 1889. The site on which the lines are built is low, and this may to some extent account for the deaths from diarrhœa and dysentery.

" *Oaklands.*—Total deaths 52, Act adults 44, non-Act 3, children 5; death-rate, Act coolies 19·94 per cent., non Act 4·11 per cent. Principal diseases, cholera 17, dysentery 6, fever 2, dropsy 13, anchylostomiasis 7, other causes 7. The high death-rate is due to an outbreak of cholera and the prevalence of anchylostomiasis, the former disease caused 32 per cent., and the latter 38 per cent. (dropsy included) of the total deaths. I inspected the garden on 27th April 1889, and found the huts to be but slightly raised from the ground. I found the garden otherwise to be in a satisfactory sanitary condition.

" *Titademaru.*—Total deaths 26, Act adults 14, non-Act adults 2, children 10. Death-rate, Act 9 98 per cent., non-Act 6·64 per cent. Principal diseases, cholera 2, dysentery 12, fever 3, dropsy 4, anchylostomiasis *nil*, other causes 5. I inspected the garden on 24th April 1889. The huts I found are not raised on plinths. I think the high mortality must be somewhat due to this condition.

" *Mesaijan.*—Total deaths 77, Act adults 46, non-Act adults 11, children 20. Death-rate, Act 23·84 per cent., non-Act 8·62 per cent. Principal diseases cholera *nil*, dysentery 1, fever 5, dropsy *nil*, anchylostomiasis 43, other causes 28. Percentage of deaths from anchylostomiasis on total is 55·8 per cent. To this the high mortality of the garden is due. I inspected the garden on 5th June 1889, and found it in good sanitary condition. Great care is now taken to detect at once, and put on the *thymol* treatment, all cases of anchylostomiasis. Dr. Norville, the medical officer of the garden, tells me that this early treatment of the cases is followed by excellent results, the patients rapidly recovering, and being again fit for work. The hospital on the garden is ill-lighted and ventilated. It requires to have two additional windows each in the male and female wards."

The Deputy-Commissioner and the Civil Surgeon visited the garden together. The Deputy-Commissioner's remarks are—

"I accompanied Dr. Daly. The sanitary arrangements are now good. There has been a severe outbreak of measles, and several of the deaths are of children. I have instructed the manager to make the windows in his hospital as required by Dr. Daly. Dr. Norville visits this garden once a week."

"*Samdang.*—Total deaths 30, Act adults 24, non-Act adults 3, children 3. Death-rate, Act 30·95 per cent., non-Act 2·11 per cent. Principal diseases, cholera 10, dysentery 8, fever 3, dropsy 3, anchylostomiasis 3, other causes 3. From correspondence and from conversation with the Deputy-Commissioner, I learned that this garden had been in a very unsanitary condition. I inspected it on 5th June 1889. I found everything in good order. The manager has recently built 60 new huts, well situated, well raised, and commodious. The clearing of jungle has been carried on, wells well situated and protected from contamination and from heat of sun. Very good segregation lines, more than a quarter of a mile from main lines, have been erected. There is a capital hospital as well as a hotel. The present state of the garden is very satisfactory. A well, however, requires to be sunk in the segregation lines, as there is no source from which water for drinking purposes can be obtained at present, except water carried from the main lines. As the segregation lines are on the banks of the river Dibru, there is danger of the river water being used for drinking purposes. Carrying water from the main lines to the segregation lines is objectionable, as it to a great extent spoils the benefit likely to arise from the segregation system."

The Deputy-Commissioner visited this garden with the Civil Surgeon. His remarks are—

"The last correspondence regarding this garden is my letter No. 4,924, of 16th March 1889, after my visit to this garden with the Chief Commissioner, and the Commissioner's reply No. 1,615, of the 4th April 1889. The manager, Mr. Higginson, had failed to carry out orders I had given in December last, and I allowed him further time. I accompanied Dr. Daly at this inspection. The improvement is most marked. There is now a really good hospital, an excellent new bungalow properly fitted, 60 new large raised houses have been built; the hotel system has been introduced, and 204 coolies are fed daily. Dr. Norville visits this garden once a week, and has an establishment under him. The wells are now good, and all my orders have been carried out thoroughly. The result is already apparent; there have been 11 deaths since the 14th March, but all these 11 deaths occurred in the segregation lines, one-fourth of a mile from the regular lines, and were all new coolies who died mainly of cholera before they had joined the garden or worked; 7 of these were Act coolies and 4 children of Act coolies. These deaths cannot be put down to the garden. There has not been a single death amongst the garden population. Of course the period between the two inspections is short, barely three months; but still the improvement is very marked. There is now life and vitality on the garden, and I am quite sure that in the long run the proprietors will benefit by the labour now bestowed on the lines and the improvement in the sanitary arrangements. The segregation lines are good, and all new coolies are kept there till all fear of contagion has passed. The manager will make a well in these lines next winter."

"*Singlijan.*—Total deaths 25, Act adults 16, non-Act adults 4, children 5; death-rate, Act coolies 11·49 per cent., non-Act 4·92 per cent. Principal diseases, cholera 6, dysentery 9, fever 4, dropsy 3, anchylostomiasis *nil*, other causes 3. I inspected this garden on 4th May 1889. I found that the ground in the vicinity of the huts is rather swampy, but that otherwise the sanitary arrangements are satisfactory.

"*Nahartoli.*—Total deaths 40, Act adults 15, non-Act adults 9, children 16. Death-rate, Act 8·04 per cent., non-Act 6·70 per cent. Principal diseases, cholera 6, dysentery 15, fever *nil*, dropsy 9, anchylostomiasis *nil*, other causes 10. I inspected the garden on 9th May 1889, but did not detect any sanitary defect. The large number of deaths among the children were due to measles, 7 deaths, and dysentery 6.

"*Sealkati and Ridgeway.*—Total deaths 66, Act adults 15, non-Act adults 3, children 18. Death-rate, Act coolies 14·36 per cent., non-Act 5·25 per cent. Principal diseases, cholera 8, dysentery 10, fever 4, dropsy 7, anchylostomiasis *nil*, other causes 37. I inspected this garden on 10th May 1889. The site on which the Sealkati lines is built is low, and as the houses are but little raised on plinths, I consider that this state of the lines must be productive of the high mortality. Ridgeway is better situated, but the huts are badly raised. The death-rate of the children is high. The causes were typhoid fever 2, measles 3, diarrhœa and dysentery 9, other causes 4. The cases of typhoid fever and dysentery would indicate the probability of the site on which huts are built being badly drained.

This garden was inspected also by the Deputy-Commissioner. His remarks are—

"This is one of our unhealthy gardens of 1888. Dr. Daly inspected it on the 10th May. I kept back his inspection report, as I was anxious to see the garden myself. I went and did so to-day. The garden has had a high death-rate for a series of years, as will be seen from the following figures. The death-rate amongst Act coolies has been terrible:—

	Act.		Non-Act.	
	Number of deaths.	Death-rate.	Number of deaths.	Death-rate.
1884	15	8·97	5	2·85
1885	14	8·27	2	0·80
1886	24	11·86	5	1 52
1887	21	9·40	11	2·83
8881	45	14·36	21	5·25

"The lines are in two divisions, Sealkati division and Ridgeway division. The former lines are built on the level ground with scarcely any floors to the houses. They are naturally damp, and I attribute the sickness and mortality to this defect. There are three *pucca* wells in these lines They are well situated at some distance from the houses, and the water cannot be contaminated. They are supplied with pumps, but only one of the three wells has a masonry platform to carry away water used for bathing purposes and washing clothes. The other two wells have no platforms. The water I tasted, and it seemed sweet and pure. I think if the floors of the houses were well raised, a broad "saucer drain" cut in the centre between the two rows of houses, the sickness would lessen considerably. The manager himself saw the defect. He is making the platform to the wells. He was anxious to raise the floors, but I considered it would be better to postpone this work till after the rains. He could only now use wet earth, and it would probably make matters worse. On going into the deaths between the two inspections, I find that the larger number occurred from the Sealkati lines, showing clearly that these lines are at fault. Between the 24th September 1888 and the 10th May 1889, 18 Act coolies have died. Of these, 13 were from the Sealkati lines, and only 5 from Ridgeway. Again, of non-Act adults during the same period, 3 deaths occurred at the Sealkati lines, and only 1 at Ridgeway, and of children 6 were from Sealkati and 3 from Ridgeway. The population is pretty evenly divided between the two places, and I think the above figures show very clearly that the Sealkati lines are responsible for the mortality. The Ridgeway lines are much better, but here, too, I think the foundations of the houses should be raised next cold weather. But I am not sure that the positions of the two Ridgeway wells are good, they are too near the huts and gardens of the coolies. If the gardens were to be manured, the water would be contaminated. I think it is absolutely necessary that one or two huts near each of the wells should be removed, and a space of at least 60 to 70 feet left perfectly clear and open without fencing or drains. If these improvements are made, I see no reason why the garden should continue unhealthy, and I must request the manager to take the work in hand in regard to the wells as soon as possible and in regard to the improvement of the lines as soon as possible after the rains. The sites of both lines are, I think, good. Sealkati especially is surrounded by tea, and is quite free from jungle. I see that Dr. Daly condemned the low houses too. I must say that I found Mr. Jameson, the manager, quite willing and ready to do all that was required, and I am sure, now that the matter has been pointed out to him, that he will see that the instructions are carried out. Dr. Hancock is the medical officer of the garden, and I hope he will advise the manager on the points I have noted. The Commissioner, in his letter No. 679 of the 8th February, animadverted strongly on the high death-rate, and suggested that I should close the garden. I postponed action till I had seen the place, and am now of opinion that the cause of the sickness can be remedied, and I will, therefore, give the garden another chance, and hope by the end of this year to find that all my instructions have been carried out. I will send a copy of these remarks to the manager and also to Dr. Hancock, and I would suggest that the latter visit the garden frequently, as often as he can, during the next three months."

As regards the Dum Duma garden, the Civil Surgeon, who inspected the garden on the 1st June 1889, found the sanitary arrangements to be good, and the Deputy-Commissioner writes :—

"I visited this garden during the past cold season. The lines are well situated. There is now a resident European medical officer, Dr. Norville ; he has other gardens to attend to, but he resides on this garden, and devotes most of his time to it. He has a capital hospital, with a staff of hospital attendants under him. The water-supply has been greatly improved this cold weather ; all the *pucca* wells have been covered in and supplied with pumps ; there are brick reservoirs, cemented inside, attached to each well ; these reservoirs are filled by the pumps, and the coolies obtain the water from taps attached to the reservoirs. The reservoirs are sheltered with thatched roofs to keep the water cool. These arrangements must benefit the health of the labourers by ensuring a supply of good pure drinking water, and I anticipate great improvement in the mortality return. During the past 9 months, that is, from September 1888 to June 1889, the death-rate amongst Act coolies has fallen to 4·33 per cent. The labour force is sufficient, considering area and outturn."

The Chief Commissioner desires to take this opportunity of acknowledging the unremitting attention and sound judgment which Mr. Driberg, the Deputy-Commissioner of Lakhimpur, brings to bear on this, as indeed on all other branches, of his official work.

Sanitary measures generally on tea gardens.

57. The following remarks made by the Sanitary Commissioner in the Sanitary Report for 1888, which relate to sanitary measures on tea-gardens, are reproduced here:—

"I think, from all I saw in my inspections, that tea-garden managers generally do everything possible to improve the health of the coolies employed on their gardens. In most gardens that I saw there are good wells, good and sufficient food, sufficient clothing for the coolies, with fair house accommodation. Everything considered, considerable attention is, as a rule, paid to sanitary arrangements and to the medical treatment of sick coolies. The hotel system for new and feeble coolies, as found on the gardens I saw, is admirable and is suited to the coolies, many of whom arrive at the gardens in a feeble state, and I think that managers deserve great credit for this idea. Favourable as the above remarks are, they only, as far as my observation goes, apply to the comparatively few gardens which I could visit. At the same time, I believe they are generally applicable. Managers will, however, do well not to be content with the progress already made, but should, where necessary, improve the drainage of the coolie-lines, raise the coolie huts on some kind of a plinth above the soil and water level, and lessen overcrowding in them. The provision of good and wholesome food is most important. Coolies should be made to wear clothing suited to the season. The

segregation of new batches of coolies should be strictly and continuously enforced. Where required, good and protected wells should be dug, and the conservancy arrangements of the lines ought to be carefully supervised, so as not to pollute the soil, water, &c., seeing that such pollution not alone increases the incidence of cholera when it is imported, or in rare cases is produced on the spot, but is also the actual cause or at least helps the production of enteric or typhoid fever, not to speak of many other diseases, such as *beri beri*, or the anæmia of coolies, &c. Enteric fever is much more common in Assam from a generally complete neglect of ordinary sanitary measures than is generally known. This kind of fever is hard to diagnose in natives of India; but it undoubtedly must be, from what we know of it elsewhere, very prevalent; and this remark will explain why many fevers are accompanied by diarrhœa, and take such a long time for their *cure*. There should be regular latrines near the coolie-lines on each tea-garden, which should be conducted on the principles indicated in paragraph 64* of this report."

* An efficient dry earth system, with air-tight iron receptacles, removal of night soil in a Crowley cart, and burial in proper trenches are required.

The Chief Commissioner understands that special credit is due to Dr. Hancock, of the Lakhimpur district, in connection with the introduction and working of the "hotel system," to the favourable results of which testimony is borne in the above extract.

General remarks on unhealthy gardens.

58. The question of the health of the coolies employed on gardens is one of immense importance, as touching both the pecuniary interests of planters and the duty of the Government in regard to emigration, and it seems to the Chief Commissioner by far the most difficult question with which we have to deal.

One of Mr. Fitzpatrick's predecessors, in words which are often quoted by the critics of the immigration system, spoke as if, in his opinion, it would be possible by due attention to sanitary arrangements to reduce the mortality on tea-gardens to as low a figure as, or even a lower figure than, that which is believed to be the average mortality of the Province. Mr. Fitzpatrick is not so sanguine as that. The climate of Assam is, and he conceives will, under the most favourable sanitary arrangements which we can make, continue to be, peculiarly fatal to new arrivals, and especially to those coming from Upper India. We must, he thinks, make up our minds to accept that as one of the drawbacks to emigration; but only people who are unable or unwilling to view the position as a whole, and who ignore the fact that the bulk of those who emigrate to Assam would have far worse evils to face in their own homes than this additional risk to life, would contend that this is any reason for stopping or discouraging emigration. At the same time, there is no doubt whatever that the excessive mortality, which, taking one year with another, at present prevails on tea-estates, is to a very large extent preventible. The subject cannot be treated adequately until the replies to the Circular No. 43, dated the 30th May 1889, calling for information as to the working of the Emigration Act generally, have come in; but as Mr. Fitzpatrick is on the point of leaving the Province, he ventures to make, for whatever they may be worth, such observations on it as occur to him as the result of his short experience here.

To begin with, it seems to him that the present system of enquiry into unhealthiness on gardens is open to improvement. A garden is now treated as unhealthy, and made the subject of special enquiry, only if the mortality among the labour force taken as a whole exceeds 70 per mille, and the deaths exceed ten in number. But a glance at the returns received year after year will show that as a rule,--a rule subject to few exceptions, and those generally due to some disturbing element which may be termed accidental,—it is among the class of "Act coolies," as they are called, which contains by far the largest proportion of freshly-imported hands, that the heavy mortality prevails, and that you will often find a garden in which the mortality among these coolies is extraordinarily high, while at the same time the mortality among the non-Act coolies is so low that the average for the aggregate of both falls below 70 per mille, and the garden is accordingly not treated as unhealthy. This is obviously wrong. The Act clearly indicates, and, indeed, it is a matter of common sense, that we should, for our present purpose, not only look to the mortality of the garden as a whole, but also to the mortality among any particular class of the labourers. The Chief Commissioner will accordingly direct that in future all gardens shall be treated as unhealthy on which the average mortality, either for the garden population as a whole, or for the Act or for the non-Act coolies, exceeds 7 per cent., and the number of deaths from which that average is struck exceeds 10.

Another defect in our present system, which will strike any one who reads the reports on unhealthy gardens, is that the causes of the unhealthiness are not as a rule investigated or reported on upon any definite system. One Civil or Medical Officer observes and reports upon one set of facts, another a different set of facts, and the consequence is that we rarely get a report which does not omit all reference to some material element.

It seems absolutely essential that a set of instructions to Civil and Medical Officers inspecting unhealthy gardens should be framed in concert with the Deputy-Surgeon-General, and circulated to draw attention to the points to be observed, and explain the manner in which these points should be dealt with.

Then, as to the causes of the severe mortality and the remedies to be applied. It seems unnecessary to say much as to what are commonly termed unsanitary conditions, and the measures designed for their removal, because the attention of our officers has long been steadfastly directed to this matter, and it is due to the managers of gardens to acknowledge that, except in the rarest instances, they are always most ready to adopt any sanitary measures recommended to them. A great deal, however, remains still to be done in this direction, and, in particular, with a view to checking the development of coolies' anæmia (referred to in the circular, copy of which is annexed to this report) and to preventing the spread of cholera.

But the causes of excessive mortality to which the Chief Commissioner desires particularly to refer, and they seem to him quite as important as, if not more so than, ordinary unsanitary conditions, are two.

The first is the introduction into the Province of coolies who are altogether unfitted to stand the climate, "bad batches," as they are called. As has been more than once pointed out, an immigrant, on first arrival in Assam, has much to contend with from the change to which he is subjected, and the greater the distance up-country he comes from, the more serious is the danger for him. The Chota-Nagpur coolies suffer more than the Bengali coolies, and those from the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, as a general rule, suffer more than either. This is, no doubt, due chiefly to the change of climate, but it may in some cases be partly due to a change of diet, a point which is now being inquired into. It need hardly be said that the risk to health thus arising is enormously increased if the coolie is already in a sickly or weak state when he arrives in Assam, and yet month after month one hears of the "bad batches" sent up by contractors or Calcutta agency houses and of the immense mortality among them. It seems to the Chief Commissioner that there is only one remedy for this, and that it is the duty of the Government, as it is for the interest of the planting community, to adopt it, *viz.*, to insist upon a strict medical examination, not merely, as at present, as to the fitness of the coolie to travel, but also as to his fitness to stand the change to Assam and to labour there. The Chief Commissioner has heard only two objections urged to this. The first he has heard urged by some garden managers, with whom he discussed the subject last cold weather. They said that the medical man conducting the examination would do so in such a perfunctory manner that it would be useless. That, they said, was their experience of such examinations. But it seems to the Chief Commissioner that that difficulty ought not to be insuperable. A considerable check could be provided upon such neglect of duty by establishing some sort of record of the medical men conducting the examination and the numbers of the coolies passed by them who die within the first two years after arrival.

The other objection which the Chief Commissioner has seen urged against a medical examination of this sort is that if it was conducted by Government Surgeons, the Government would seem to be responsible for their mistakes; but this difficulty could easily be got over by allowing those engaged in the emigration business a wide choice as to the places at which the examination could be made, and as to the medical men by whom it should be made, and laying down that, when the work was entrusted to a medical officer in the service of Government, he should be considered to perform it as part of his private practice, and should receive fees for it. The Government would then be no more responsible for a medical officer who passed a "bad batch" of coolies than they would be responsible for him if he treated one of his private patients carelessly or unskilfully.

The other cause of excessive mortality to which Mr. Fitzpatrick desires to direct attention is the omission to place a sick coolie under medical treatment until he has become so ill that he is forced to give up work and himself apply to be put under treatment. This is particularly observable in the case of coolies' anæmia, or, as it is more correctly termed, *anchylostomiasis*. Now that attention has been directed to the matter, we are discovering that this disease prevails to a lamentable extent among the coolies, and that a very large proportion of the deaths, which have up to this been classed as resulting from dropsy, dysentery, and other familiar diseases, really result from it. Thus, though the question had not been properly taken up except in a few localities at the time the reports of the local officers now before us were written, we find it stated that in the Behali garden, in Darrang, one fourth of the coolies, when paraded, were found to be in an anæmic condition. In some of the gardens in the Lakhimpur district examined by Dr. Daly, whose attention was directed to the subject, the proportion of the deaths due to this disease was found to be very large, in one garden as high as 50 per cent. of the whole, and in the Hilika garden, in Sibságar, inspected by Dr. Banerjee, more than 121 cases were found to have occurred, out of which 21 died, owing to the disease not having been properly diagnosed in time. What the Chief

Commissioner himself saw at one garden he visited is stated in the circular already referred to; but it is unnecessary to multiply evidence on the point, because the extent to which anæmia of some sort, which, there can now be little doubt, is as a rule the result of the particular disease here in question, prevails among coolies is perfectly well known to everyone who has been in the habit of visiting tea-gardens and Government dispensaries in this Province. And yet, though the disease, when it has developed itself to any extent, is readily detected even by a non-professional observer, and though it is perfectly amenable to treatment if taken at an early stage, numbers of coolies palpably suffering from it are allowed to go on working, or trying to work, until it developes consequences which resemble those of dropsy or dysentery or some other familiar disease, and then, and only then, it is taken up by the native doctor attached to the garden, who, in all probability, entirely mistakes its nature, and when the patient dies, as he is pretty certain to do, records the death as one from dropsy or dysentery, or whatever other disease the symptoms may seem to him to indicate. Whether there are other diseases that are allowed to run on in this way, till it is too late to effect a cure, it is impossible to say; but no one who knows the extreme reluctance of a person of the coolie class to submit himself to medical treatment, and the indolence and apathy of the ordinary native doctor, can help suspecting that there are.

The proper remedy for this would be that a number of gardens in the same neighbourhood should unite, as some do at present, and appoint a European medical officer or a specially-qualified Native Assistant-Surgeon, who would visit each garden once a week and spend a couple of hours there, examining all the coolies on parade, ordering those to be put under medical treatment who seem to stand in need of it, and looking into the treatment adopted by the native doctor in the case of those already on his list. The cost of this to each garden would be quite insignificant, and, the Chief Commissioner believes, would be more than recovered in the saving of health and life which it would effect.

The only other remark the Chief Commissioner desires to make is that the provisions of the Act relating to unhealthy gardens (Section 128 *et seq.*) are in several respects defective, and that comparatively little use seems to be made of them. As, however, the question of amending them has been referred to district officers for their opinion, the Chief Commissioner will not on this occasion enter into the question.

CHAPTER VI.—INSPECTION.

Number of gardens submitting returns.

59. The number of gardens shown in the inspection registers has fallen from 895 in 1887 to 892 in 1888, and the number submitting returns from 761 to 755. The Chief Commissioner is glad to notice that in some districts the Deputy-Commissioners are able to report that the Managers submit their returns with punctuality, but in others this is far from being the case. Thus the Deputy-Commissioner of Cachar reports that only about one-third of the returns were received from Managers on or before the due date; and that in consequence of their default in this respect it was necessary to proceed against six Managers, all of whom were fined. In Lakhimpur, also, two Managers were prosecuted and punished by fine. In addition to these, one prosecution was instituted in Nowgong, but was withdrawn, as the defaulter submitted the returns. The Chief Commissioner would again draw attention to the fact noticed in last year's report that much inconvenience would be prevented if Managers would submit correct and punctual returns.

Classification of gardens according to the labourers employed and inspection of Act and non-Act gardens.

60. The following statement shows the number of gardens, classified district by district, according to the class and number of the labourers employed, the number which submitted returns, and the number visited by inspecting officers :—

	Cachar.					Sylhet.					Kámrúp					Darrang.				
	Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act. Over 50.	Non-Act. Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.	Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act. Over 50.	Non-Act. Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.	Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act. Over 50.	Non-Act. Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.	Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act. Over 50.	Non-Act. Under 50.	No coolies on estate	Total.
Number of gardens	155	21	..	8	184	74	34	2	2	112	10	6	46	28	89	68	10	2	5	85
Ditto sending returns 50 and 51	155	21	..	..	176	74	34	1	..	109	10	6	2	..	18	68	10	1	..	79
Ditto inspected once	144	14	..	..	158	74	33	1	1	109	10	6	3	..	19	61	9	..	..	70
Ditto ditto twice.....	11	3	..	..	14	..	1	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	1
Ditto ditto thrice	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	.	..	..
Total number inspected ..	155	17	..	..	172	74	34	1	1	110	10	6	3	..	19	62	9	..	..	71
Total number inspected in 1887.	97	7	..	..	104	75	34	3	1	113	10	6	3	..	19	65	7	..	..	72

	Nowgong.					Sibságar.					Lakhimpur					Total.				
	Employing Act coolies.	Non Act Over 50.	Non Act Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.	Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act. Over 50.	Non-Act. Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.	Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act. Over 50.	Non-Act. Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total.	Employing Act coolies.	Non-Act Over 50.	Non-Act Under 50.	No coolies on estate.	Total
Number of gardens.....	31	17	8	5	61	161	11	6	33	211	132	4	4	10	150	631	103	67	91	892
Ditto sending returns 50 and 51	31	17	8	..	56	161	11	6	..	178	132	4	3	..	139	631	103	21	..	755
Ditto inspected once	31	17	1	..	49	162	11	2	..	165	132	4	4	..	130	594	94	11	1	700
Ditto ditto twice.....	..	..	..	..	..	9	..	..	..	9	10	..	..	..	10	31	4	..	..	35
Ditto ditto thrice	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	.	..	..	..
Total number inspected ..	31	17	1	.	49	161	11	2	..	174	132	4	4	..	140	625	98	11	1	735
Total number inspected in 1887.	30	19	..	..	49	159	10	2	3	174	128	2	..	..	130	564	85	8	4	661

The above figures show a considerable improvement in the amount of inspection-work performed during the year. In 1887, of 761 gardens submitting returns, 645 were inspected once, 15 twice, and one thrice; whereas during the year under report, of 755 gardens which submitted returns, 700 were inspected once and 35 twice. There has thus been substantial progress, which the Chief Commissioner is glad to notice, especially in the case of Cachar, where the results under this head formed the subject of unfavourable comment in last year's report. At the same time the Chief Commissioner is not satisfied that the number of gardens inspected more than once during the year represents a proper proportion of those which should be so inspected, and he trusts that future reports will show further improvement in this respect.

As regards the agency by which the inspections were carried out, it is satisfactory to notice that a larger proportion of inspection work was performed by Deputy-Commissioners during the year under report. In Lakhimpur, the Deputy-Commissioner, Mr. Driberg, who displays a special interest in this department of his work, inspected 36 gardens; and in Cachar the Deputy-Commissioner, Mr. Kennedy, who also attends carefully to such matters, inspected 29 gardens. On the other hand, no inspection work was done by the Deputy-Commissioner of Sylhet, whose time is said to be "fully occupied otherwise." The Chief Commissioner admits that some allowance must be made on this account, as the Deputy-Commissioner of Sylhet is undoubtedly a hard-worked officer; but still Mr. Stevenson ought to have done some work of this description during the year under report. It is impossible for a Deputy-Commissioner to obtain and preserve that familiarity with the system which is essential to enable him to supervise his subordinates in the working of it unless he himself takes a fair proportion of the duty of inspection.

CHAPTER VII.—WORKING OF THE SYSTEM GENERALLY.

Relations of employers and labourers

61. The following information regarding the relations between employers and labourers is taken, except in one instance, from the district reports

In Cachar, the Deputy-Commissioner sees no reason to alter his opinion expressed in former years that the relations between employers and labourers are generally good. Only one or two cases of petty assault occurred during the year in addition to the case mentioned in paragraph 35 of this report, and it is said that the commonest causes of dispute between Managers and coolies relate (1) to tasks, the question being as to the precise time when regular tasks should be given to newly-arrived coolies; and (2) to the provision in the contract regarding the price of rice and the deductions on account of rice advanced from the garden stores. Both of these matters have been noticed* in the Chief Commissioner's Circular No. 43, dated the 30th May 1889; and, pending the receipt of further information regarding them, it is only necessary to observe here, as regards tasks, that on most well-managed gardens a liberal allowance is made in the case of new coolies who are learning their work, a course which is dictated by considerations of common prudence, because, in the first place, new coolies, being specially liable to illness, require to be well fed and not to be overworked; and in the second place, because new coolies, if discontented, are very ready to desert. In Sylhet, no cases of misunderstanding between Managers and coolies were brought to light during the year, with the exception of one charge of assault brought by a labourer against a Manager in South Sylhet, which on enquiry turned out to be false. In Kámrúp, no complaints were instituted before the Magistrate by either Managers or labourers. In Darrang, the relations between employers and coolies were generally good, although a few cases of assault and rioting and one case of singular brutality on the part of a manager, which will be presently noticed, occurred. In one garden in this district some 200 Bengali coolies, armed with sticks, collected, and complained that they had not enough time to eat their rice in the middle of the day. The Manager replied that they would be allowed an additional half an hour for this purpose, and they dispersed, but only to collect again later in the day, as before. The Manager accordingly sent information to the nearest thána, and an enquiry was made by the police, with the result that seven of the ringleaders were ultimately convicted by the Deputy-Commissioner, two of whom were sentenced to three months' rigorous imprisonment and the rest to two months' rigorous imprisonment each under Section 147 of the Penal Code (rioting). In another case, a dispute arose between some coolies and the line chaukidár, in consequence of the latter wishing to get possession of some women, with whom the former were on terms of intimacy. The chaukidár appears to have assaulted the women, who raised an outcry, in consequence of which the coolies gave the chaukidár a severe beating, from the effects of which he died. The four accused were committed to the Court of Sessions, with the result that three were acquitted and one was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for two years under Section 325 of the Penal Code (voluntarily causing grievous hurt). In a third case, two coolies were sentenced to six months' rigorous imprisonment for having assaulted a sardár, who had marked them as absent for work; and in another case a sardár was convicted and sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment for having assaulted and kicked a coolie woman who was suffering from fever, and died shortly afterwards in hospital.

* See paragraphs 52 and 55 of Circular at pages xi and xv. of Appendix A, attached to this report

The remaining case, above referred to as being a case of singular brutality, was one in which a garden manager named Dickie flogged four female coolies with a leather strap in a shameful manner for having deserted. It was a case which, one would have thought, manifestly called for very severe treatment, but the officer who dealt with it, and whom, as he has earned high distinction in other fields, the Chief Commissioner forbears to name on this occasion, disposed of it simply by cancelling the women's contracts and awarding them compensation under Section 140 of the Emigration Act. Subsequently, when an attempt was made to proceed against Dickie in the Criminal Court, the women could not be found, and after several months spent in vain endeavours to find them the accused was discharged. The Chief Commissioner has allowed the matter to rest there, partly because the accused has already suffered a substantial, though far from adequate, punishment in having been compelled to resign his appointment and pay his employers Rs. 400 for the damage caused to them by the loss of the labourers, and in being kept for many months hanging about on bail, but chiefly because it is by no means certain that the discharge would under the circumstances be set aside by a superior court. It should be stated that one of the grounds on which the order of discharge was based was that the offence was

compoundable under Section 345 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, and that, that being so, it would be unfair to the accused to proceed against him, when the women, who might be willing to compound it, could not be traced. Now, whatever may be thought of this argument, and the Chief Commissioner is prepared to admit that there is something in it, the question it at once suggests is whether an offence of this particular description, which, unlike an ordinary offence under Section 323 of the Penal Code, is from several points of view of a public character, ought to be compoundable. It seems to the Chief Commissioner that it is the duty of the Government, which has established the emigration system, as it is for the interest of those engaged in the great industry for the service of which that system has been established, to insist that the grosser cases of ill-treatment of labourers should be punished whether the labourers desire to prosecute or not, but this will be impossible if such cases are allowed to be compounded, for it is certain that any European employé of a garden charged with an offence for which he would be likely to be sentenced to imprisonment would be prepared to pay a large sum by way of composition, and that, unless in exceptional cases, when feeling happened to run very high, the labourer would accept it. The remedy would be to allow the magistrate a discretion, such as he is already allowed in certain cases by Section 345, to permit the offence to be compounded or not, as he thinks fit, and the point should, the Chief Commissioner thinks, be considered when the Emigration Act is being amended next year.

In Nowgong, the relations between employers and labourers are said to have been generally very satisfactory, although a few isolated cases of assault, theft, and mischief by fire, in which coolies were the culprits, came before the courts. Not a single charge was brought against a Manager. In one case two coolies were charged with having attempted to assault a Manager with *lathis*, and were convicted and sentenced to a week's rigorous imprisonment each under Section 352 of the Penal Code (assault or use of criminal force otherwise than on grave provocation). The men in this case were incensed because the Manager had kept in hand the pay of one of their caste fellows, who was acting as his *panirala*, and was suspected of having committed theft. In Sibságar, with a labour force exceeding 80,000 persons, only six complaints were preferred during the year by labourers against employers, and the Deputy-Commissioner reports that the relations between employers and employed continued to be on the whole satisfactory. All these six cases were of petty assault,—which were punished with fine, and only two require special notice. In one of these a Manager struck a *pankhawala* with a cane, and the man died a week afterwards from a combination of causes. The matter was inquired into, and the District Superintendent of Police reported that a petty assault had been committed, which, however, could not be even indirectly connected with the coolie's death. The magisterial enquiry which followed showed that the coolie had never complained of having been beaten, while he had for years suffered from chronic asthma. The cause of death was pneumonia. The petty assault was proved, and the Manager was fined Rs. 50. In the second case, a Manager was fined Rs. 150 under Sections 323 and 342 of the Penal Code (voluntarily causing hurt and wrongful confinement) for having assaulted and wrongfully confined two time-expired coolies, who, having received discharge certificates, had gone to the garden for the purpose of removing their property. On the other hand, in three cases complaints were made by Managers against the coolies. In one of these, nine coolies were imprisoned for a fortnight for "unlawful assembly and criminal trespass." In another case, some coolies were sentenced to two months' imprisonment for having assaulted the Assistant-Manager who was reproving a coolie for bad work In the third case, the Manager, having ordered a man, who was making a disturbance in the lines, to go to the bungalow, was threatened by other coolies, who incited those present to beat him. In this case, the culprits were sentenced to three months' imprisonment. In Lakhimpur, the Chief Commissioner regrets that it is necessary to notice a case of brutality, similar to that above referred to, in which some female coolies were flogged in a garden known as the Mesaijan garden. The Deputy-Commissioner gives the following account of the case : –

"A large body of coolies left the garden and came to the station, complaining of ill-treatment. They stated that both men and women had been flogged; in the case of women, that they had been tied to a post in the porch of the Manager's house, their clothes lifted up to their waists, and that they had been beaten on the bare buttocks with a stirrup leather by the orders of the Assistant-Manager, Mr. Anding. The District Superintendent of Police went out and enquired, and found that two women, Panu and Khumti, had been assaulted in the way described. I myself also went out, and, on further enquiry, ascertained that a woman, named Sukni, had also been beaten some three or four times. The women, Panu and Khumti, had been flogged for desertion, and Sukni for short work. The Assistant-Manager, Anding, was tried in the three cases, and sentenced to suffer rigorous imprisonment in the aggregate for a period of ten months, and to pay a fine of Rs. 450. The fine was realised, and the prisoner is now undergoing his imprisonment in the Calcutta jail. In two other cases, the subordinate, a syce, who had actually inflicted the beating under Mr. Anding's orders, was imprisoned for 22 days, and sentenced to pay a fine of Rs. 30."

Another case of a different description is thus described by the Deputy-Commissioner :—

"A sardár of the Choto Hapjan garden assaulted a sick coolie who had deserted and had been apprehended. He gave the coolie three slaps and a push. The coolie fell down, and was kicked. He was then taken to the hospital, where he died. The assault was not a severe one, and there was no intention on the part of the sardár to cause death or knowledge that he was likely to cause death. He was, however, committed to the Sessions, and, on conviction, was sentenced to six months' rigorous imprisonment for simple hurt."

In addition to the above, two cases of ordinary assault, both of a trifling character, were brought against garden employers, and the accused were fined. On the subject of the relations which generally prevailed between employers and labourers, the Deputy-Commissioner, Mr. Driberg, writes :—

"Besides the Mesaijan cases, to which reference has already been made, the records of the criminal courts show very few complaints of harshness or ill-treatment by labourers against their employers. In one case an assistant was fined Rs. 12 for assaulting with a stick a coolie, and in another the Manager of a small garden was fined for a petty assault on a labourer; but these cases are really the only ones. My experience of the past year satisfies me that both employers and labourers pull well together, though there have been occasional cases of dissatisfaction on the part of labourers."

Later in his report, Mr. Driberg writes:—

"Everywhere through the district I find that the planters get on well with their labourers. A case like the Mesaijan affair is an exceptional one, and must not be taken as a specimen of a planter's behaviour towards his coolies; on the contrary, the coolie is really well treated in nearly every garden in the district, and is on good terms with his employer."

As regards the relations between the employers and the labourers generally, the Chief Commissioner has little to add to what was said in paragraph 5 of last year's report, beyond this, that, with the additional experience which he has gained since the last report was written, he sees no reason whatever to modify the opinion there recorded,—that, speaking generally, the relations between the employers and the labourers are fairly good. As he there observed, with about nine hundred gardens, employing considerably over 300,000 hands, there must of course be a certain proportion of bad men, perhaps even of thoroughly depraved men, among the superintending staff, and there must be a certain amount of harshness and oppression at times, possibly even of downright cruelty, but that two cases of brutal ill-treatment of women should occur within a single year, was, he confesses, more than he was prepared for. At the same time, it would, he considers, be a most serious injustice to the planting community to suggest that such conduct as that of Dickie and Anding could be regarded otherwise than as exceptional to an extraordinary degree. Wherever Mr. Fitzpatrick went in the course of his last cold weather tour, he heard it condemned in the strongest language. From the planters of one district he received a formal communication on the subject, and it is within his knowledge that a movement has been on foot in Upper Assam to form a committee of managers to guard against abuses of authority by individual employés. It is only necessary to add that the Chief Commissioner has during the year under report continued to enquire carefully into every case, whether brought to notice in the Press or otherwise, in which there has been the slightest suggestion of a cause of complaint, whether on the side of employers or of labourers.

Relations between the tea-garden population and the villagers.

62. The immigrant population continued to live on good terms with the natives of the country, and the only recurring cause of friction between Managers and villagers may, speaking generally, be said to consist of cattle trespass. It may be interesting to quote some of the remarks made by Deputy-Commissioners on this point. The Deputy-Commissioner of Cachar writes:—

"The relations between the garden labourers and the villagers have continued good. The aid of the labourers is sought more and more in harvesting crops, and the mirasdars do their best to get time-expired garden coolies as tenants."

In Darrang, it is said that coolies often employ Assamese and Kacharis to cultivate their land for them, and the Deputy-Commissioner reports that no disputes regarding the payment of wages have been brought to his notice. In Nowgong, the coolies are said to co-operate with the villagers especially at harvest time. The Deputy-Commissioner adds:—

"Most of the coolies possess bullocks which they lend to the villagers with the view of getting grain from them in return. Many time-expired coolies and free labourers have permanently settled in the district."

The Deputy-Commissioner of Sibságar remarks :—

"The coolies are a source of profit to the Assamese, as the largest háts are of course near to gardens. Gardens also supply labourers for the Assamese."

Lastly, the Deputy-Commissioner of Lakhimpur writes:—

"There has been no friction or quarrel during the year between garden people and villagers. In this district, near almost every garden, we have settlements of ex-coolies, and these people are on good terms with their fellow countrymen residing in the garden; they trade with each other, visit and drink with each other, and the ex-coolie often supplies articles required by the garden coolie. Even between the foreign population in gardens and the Assamese villagers, relations have been all that could be desired."

General condition of labourers.

63. In paragraph 34 of this report, reference has been made to the fact that, independently of the amount received as wages, or bonuses, or "ticca pice," it is by no means an uncommon thing for the labourers on tea-gardens to enjoy supplementary means of livelihood, which add materially to their incomes, and consequently to their comfort and well-being. Writing on this point, the Deputy-Commissioner of Sylhet observes:—

"There is no doubt that, as a rule, coolies are well off on tea-gardens in this district. Nearly every family has a cow; indeed, Managers encourage the purchase of cattle as a means of attaching the coolie to the garden. Some own bullocks, which they hire out to the gardens and villagers. Cases have been known of coolies advancing sums of money to Bengali cultivators and taking in lieu of interest so much of the crop when harvested. Most families have a piece of garden ground, where pumpkins, some dhal, sweet potatoes, or the like, are grown."

In Cachar, paddy land is, in the case of several estates, cultivated by the coolies; and this practice also prevails to a certain extent in Sylhet.

The following is an extract from some rough notes made by the Chief Commissioner during his tour in the Cachar district:—

"Coming along from Sildhubi this morning, I met long strings of bullocks bringing in firewood for a tea-garden. These bullocks belonged to the garden coolies, who were said by one of the coolies to have 360 among them. They got 7 pice per maund for the wood they brought in, and each bullock carried 3 maunds. * * * One coolie said he had 5 bullocks, another 4."

The Deputy-Commissioner of Darrang reports:—

"The condition of the coolie when he first arrives in Assam is one of abject poverty, combined with a spirit of improvidence. It is only when he marries and has a family earning *ticca* pay in the leaf-plucking season that he begins to save money, invests in cattle, land, &c., and makes up his mind to permanently settle in Assam. He can rarely afford to do this at the end of his first agreement; and were he to take up land then, he would have to work it on borrowed capital. During my visits to gardens in this district, I was much struck with the general look of prosperity of the coolie population. There is a ready market for any fowls, eggs, vegetables, milk, cattle, &c., that they may wish to sell, and there are many good *hâts* at which a market either for sale or purchase of ordinary commodities can be found."

The Deputy-Commissioner of Nowgong writes on the same subject:—

"I here append extracts from letters from some Managers to whom I had written for information on this subject.

"Mr. Gilman of Kulikushi and Balikushi writes—'There are very few coolies who after the first year do not possess cattle and fowls and eggs, and again the majority here have rice land under them.'

"Mr. Pereira of Owguri writes—'Besides their monthly wages, the coolies get paid for extra work. A number have cows (bullocks), which they farm out to villagers, securing for themselves half the crop of *dhan*. They also keep goats and fowls; milk is generally sold by these people too.'

"Mr. Chamney of the Dipu Valley Estate writes—'My coolies possess a large number of cows, goats, fowls, &c., which bring them in a fair return by trading at the local *hât*.'

"Mr. Osborne of Nelli writes—'Local agreement coolies are as a rule wholly independent of their pay, having generally in their possession several cattle and a piece of land. The best of the recruited coolies, also, after they have been in Assam for a short time, are in a well-to-do position. As a matter of fact, coolies who choose to work, and do not malinger or spend their money in drink, soon lay by sufficient to buy a cow, of which they sell so much of the milk as they do not require for home consumption; or one or more bullocks, which they can hire out on advantageous terms to their Assamese neighbours; also fowls, of which they sell the chickens and eggs, and goats, of which they sell the kids, or pigs (among such as are allowed to do so by caste rules), which I believe are extremely profitable. The numerous *hâts* give ample opportunity for traders. Many lend small sums of money at usurious rates, thus rapidly increasing their original store, and many have cultivation. It is no uncommon occurrence for a coolie to be found in possession of Rs. 500 or Rs. 600, though they of course do not publish the fact abroad. Such cases come to light when a coolie happens to have been robbed."

Writing on the same subject, the Deputy-Commissioner of Sibságar observes:—

"I wrote to the principal Managers of gardens for the information called for in paragraph 3 of the Chief Commissioner's Circular No. 11, dated the 27th February 1889. In reply, the Managers all state that a large number of coolies cultivate vegetables for their own use, and sell the surplus if any. Many keep cows, bullocks, and buffaloes. The latter animals they either employ in ploughing their own paddy-fields or hire out to the neighbouring villagers in consideration of receiving a fixed quantity of paddy in return. The bullocks are also used for carts, which some prospering families (on Hilikha and Amguri gardens) possess. The carts are let out on hire at Re. 1-8 per diem, and are also employed on *ticca* work. To keep cows and sell the milk appears to be the most usual practice of coolies who care to earn something besides their wages. The cows are kept by the coolies to the following extent:—On Suffrai estate, there is one cow to each house in the lines. On Sonari garden,

the ratio is as 1 to 2. On Baruasali and Kanu gardens the proportion is nearly one cow per head of coolies. Some Managers have given the actual number of cows kept by the coolies, while the rest have written only in general terms. Thus, on Atabari Tea Estate, there are from 600 to 700 cows. On Karsali, 80 coolies, old and new, own between them 210 head of cattle.

"The Manager of Amguri calculates that 20 per cent. of his coolies cultivate paddy. On Atabari Tea Estate, more than half the number of coolies cultivate paddy. One Manager says that 14 of his coolies reaped 1,130 *purás* (282½ maunds) of paddy in the last season. The coolies get land from the neighbouring agriculturists, on terms under which the coolies get from half to one-third of the produce.

In some gardens, the coolies get lands from the Manager at a nominal rent only. They sometimes make baskets, and sell them in the neighbouring *hat*; fowls are also reared and sold by the coolies. The coolies very rarely, if ever, work for money wages for the neighbouring agriculturists. Many mention that it is only the old coolies, that is coolies of more than a year's standing, who see their way to earning extra money in any of the above ways,—the new arrivals being less familiar with the practices of the garden."

Lastly, the Deputy-Commissioner of Lakhimpur writes:—

"In every garden you will find large number of cows, goats, pigs, fowls, and ducks; some of these are purchased,—others reared in the lines. It is impossible to form any estimate of the number of animals owned by coolies; but I think I am well within the mark when I say that 80 per cent. of old coolies, that is coolies who have served out their first contract and re-engaged, have a small farm; no doubt many coolies during the period of their first contract are able to and do purchase cattle, but the numbers are less. I do not think that much milk is sold outside; but it is consumed in the lines and forms a useful adjunct to the coolies' diet. To keep carts or bullocks is an exception; it is only when the coolie leaves a garden and settles in a *basti* that he becomes the owner of carts, which he lets out on hire. If he had carts while under engagement to the garden, he would have to hire a servant to drive his cart. In the same way a coolie under contract scarcely ever works for neighbouring agriculturists. He has his own garden work to do to earn his pay, and he can always earn double by doing extra work. Some few men occasionally work outside the garden in addition to their contract task, but such cases are exceptional. I do not think labourers have the time, or opportunity, or indeed the necessity, to work for outsiders; but I do know that hundreds of ex-coolies settled in our *bastis* and cultivating our lands work in gardens. I know many gardens worked thus. I recently inspected a garden of 300 acres, and found under 10 coolies in the lines. The garden is worked entirely by '*basti* labour.' In the paddy-cultivating season, the ex-coolies can only give half a day to garden work; but in the slack season, that is when there is no cultivation going on, the ex-coolies can and do work the whole day for the planter. It is really the ex-coolie who works for the garden and the garden coolie, and not the garden coolie for the ex-coolie or cultivator, though both are benefited. But though the garden coolie is not able to earn money outside the garden by manual labour to any extent, he can always do so in the garden, and, if he likes, double his pay in the busy months, say from April to October; and, besides this, as I have said, he has in many cases his cows, his pigs, and his poultry to supply him with food. So the lot of a good healthy coolie is by no means a bad one."

The Chief Commissioner has inserted the above extracts, because he thinks it is desirable to give prominence to the fact that labourers on tea-gardens are, after they have become established on the garden, by no means exclusively dependent for their livelihood on the sums which they receive in return for the work performed by them as garden coolies. It may be added that the matter of the collateral means of livelihood of coolies working on tea-gardens has been specially noted for investigation and report in the Circular* recently issued regarding the working of Act I. of 1882.

* See paragraph 59 of Circular No. 48, dated the 30th May 1889, at page xv. of Appendix A, attached to this report.

As regards the general condition of the labourers, the Chief Commissioner cited last year the opinion of the Revd. Mr. Heberlet, a missionary whose experience lay in the Surma Valley. On the present occasion he would cite the following from a letter which appeared a few months ago from the Revd. Isaac Row, Secretary to the Anglo-Indian Evangelization Society, whose experience seems to have been in Upper Assam. Mr. Row writes—

"I am much interested in the correspondence in your columns with reference to the tea planters of Upper Assam, and their treatment of the coolies under their charge, and I shall be glad if, in the interest of the cause of truth, you will kindly allow me to give my testimony on this subject. I think I may fairly claim to speak with some authority, as during the past two years I have spent nearly twelve months in the Brahmaputra Valley, and during that time travelled very widely over the country. My observations, therefore, have not been superficial and confined merely to a few gardens in the more settled districts, but my work as a Minister of the Anglo-Indian Evangelization Society led me to visit a very large number of out-of-the-way gardens, seldom, if ever, visited by strangers, and my testimony is that of an impartial witness, equally the friend both of the coolie and of the planter. * * * * * *

"As a rule, all the coolies that I saw, numbering tens of thousands, were remarkably well cared for by their employers, and I could specify many instances of special kindness and consideration on the part of the latter, of which I was myself an eye-witness.

"I am quite sure that there are hundreds of starving poor in England to-day who would be most thankful if they could only be as well fed and as well housed as are the great bulk of the people employed on the tea gardens of Upper Assam.

"I say this the more emphatically, because, in former years, I laboured much among the destitute poor of London.

"The misrepresentations so persistently made with reference to this subject are a great wrong, not only to the planters, but to the coolies themselves, of whom there are tens of thousands half starved in overcrowded districts in Bengal and elsewhere, who should be encouraged and helped to emigrate to Assam, where they might readily find lucrative and easy employment.

"I could say a great deal more on this matter, but I must not encroach too much on your columns. I will only add that I will be happy at any time to give the fullest information in my power, and to help to check the mischief done by the false statements made by those whose delight it is to foment class hatred."

Settlement of time-expired garden labourers on the land.

64. The figures below show the amonnt of land held by immigrants, for the most part time-expired immigrants, in the various districts of the Province:—

District.	1887. Acres.	1888. Acres.
Cachar	1,279	6,153
Sylhet	128	200
Kámrúp	15	15
Darrang	4,814	5,742
Nowgong	853	1,224
Sibságar	6,254	8,109
Lakhimpur	3,071	3,872
Total	16,414	25,315

These figures show a more or less considerable advance in the case of each district except Kámrúp; but it must be remembered, as was pointed out in last year's report, that the statistics do not include cultivation on waste land grants or settlements on private lands, but relate only to those immigrants who have settled on land held directly from Government. Writing on this subject, Mr. Kennedy, the Deputy-Commissioner of Cachar (the large increase shown in which district is understood to be due to the fact of more careful enquiry having been made), observes:—

"As to the land cultivated by tea-garden coolies, it is quite impossible to give any reliable figures as to lands cultivated by coolies as tenants. There are two large tracts in the south of the sadr sub-division and one large one in the south of Hailákándi, where the time-expired coolies form an appreciable part of the cultivating population, but they hold mainly as tenants.

"As sub-tenants, coolies hold largely in the Chatla bhil in the sadr and in the south of the Hailákándi sub-division. I saw a good deal of their holdings during my cold-weather tour, and estimate that they hold nearly as much land as sub-tenants as mirasdars. In this I do not include paddy fields belonging to gardens leased by coolies, but to land leased by coolies who have finally left their gardens. Altogether, then, we may safely say coolies who have left garden work altogether cultivate close on 12,000 acres, which, at the rate of about 10 acres per household, would give a coolie population of 1,200 households. The Sub-divisional officer of Hailákándi estimates three acres only per household; but this estimate is based on the new settlements to take effect from the commencement of this year, which he has just made in the land thrown out of the Dhaleswar Reserve. The number of claimants there was so great that the amount of land allowed to each applicant had to be cut down very low. Five persons of all ages on an average are found in coolie families I should say, and this would give a total cultivating and settled coolie population, including children, of 6,000."

The Deputy-Commissioner of Sylhet writes on the same subject:—

"As regards land held by time-expired coolies, definite information is difficult to obtain..... In the case of Government land, which is managed by a special establishment like Partabgarh, alone can anything like exact figures be expected. It would seem that, on the 31st December 1888, 605 *bighas* and odd of land in the tahsil were actually cultivated by so-called time-expired coolies. Of this area, 214 *bighas* and odd were brought under cultivation during 1888. On the 31st December 1886, the corresponding figure was 261 *bighas*; but this figure may not be very reliable."

The Deputy-Commissioner of Darrang reports that the land (5,742 acres) held by time-expired coolies in that district is held by 2,219 men, 1,984 women, and 2,719 children; and he adds that—

"A large amount of *rupit* land on fee-simple estates is also cultivated by time-expired labourers, but Managers keep no statistics of the area so cultivated."

In Lakhimpur, the Deputy-Commissioner reports that one tea company in that district owning fee-simple grants has a large number of ryots settled in several villages

on those grants, who are looked after by a mauzadár appointed by the Manager, the mauzadár keeping the books and making assessments exactly as the Government mauzadárs do, and that these ryots pay altogether about Rs. 700 a year as revenue. In the Darrang district, a somewhat similar state of things has been found to exist. Separate enquiry will be made into these cases.

Question of distributing immigration more evenly over the several months of the year

65. In connection with the outbreak of cholera which occurred during the year amongst immigrants to the Assam Valley, and to which reference has been made in paragraph 11 of this report, Dr Eteson, the late Deputy-Surgeon-General and Sanitary Commissioner of this Province, suggested that, in order to minimize the difficulty which is caused by the annually-recurring influx of immigrants during a comparatively few months of each year, an effort should be made to equalise the distribution of immigrants by imposing a monthly limit on recruiting. This suggestion was carefully considered in consultation with the Government of Bengal, the Commissioner of the Assam Valley Districts, the Deputy-Commissioners of the more important tea districts in this Province, and certain representative firms of employers of labour, with the result that there was found to be a very general consensus of opinion that it would be impracticable, and possibly also undesirable, to take action in the direction suggested. At the same time, the Chief Commissioner would point out, as there seems to be some misapprehension on the point, that no obligation is created either by law or rule whereby employers either in the Assam or Surma Valleys are required to import labour at any particular seasons of the year, and that no prohibition exists against the importation of labour at any time which may seem most convenient to the garden managers concerned.

Inland Labour Transport Fund

66. The Inland Labour Transport Fund is maintained under Section 192 of Act I. of 1882, which lays down that—

"Subject to the power of a Magistrate under this Act or the Code of Criminal Procedure to award fines in whole or in part as compensation to or for the benefit of any complainant or other person, the Local Government shall credit all fines, fees, and rates levied and paid under this Act in the territories under its administration to a fund, which shall be called the 'Inland Labour Transport Fund;' and such fund shall be at the disposal of such Local Government, in such manner as the Government of India may direct, for paying the salaries and allowances of all officers and establishments appointed under this Act by such Local Government and their pensionary and leave allowances, and generally for defraying the expenses of carrying out the purposes of this Act and the rules of the Local Government made hereunder.

"The annual surplus accruing in such fund shall be applied to reducing the annual rate or the registration-fees leviable under this Act, and not otherwise."

The following figures show the receipts and disbursements of the Fund, in Bengal and Assam, during the year 1888-89:—

Receipts.	Rs.	A.	P.	Disbursements.	Rs.	A.	P.
Medical	24	0	0	Salaries of depôt establishments (including Native Doctors, Hospital-Assistants, compounders, dressers, and menial servants)	9,474	13	4
Contractors' license fees under Section 13	650	0	0	Supplies and services (including diet of patients, value of medical stores, purchase of country medicines, petty constructions and repairs).	8,374	3	5
Recruiters ditto ditto 24	1,376	0	0	Contingent charges	1,793	6	7
Registration-fees under Sections 35 and 68	9,155	2	0	Grants to dispensaries	5,383	9	0
Fees for licenses of inland steamers and native boats under Section 90	2,533	4	0	Inspectors, Embarkation Agents, and other officers.	20,847	9	3
Rates under Section 109	45,774	10	0	Clerks and servants	13,604	5	3
Fees for use of debarkation depôts	4,751	5	3	Travelling allowances	6,056	8	11
Diet, &c., charges recovered	901	3	9	Miscellaneous (including rents, percentage for treasury establishments, refunds, pensions)	4,515	12	4
Recoveries for sick coolies treated in hospitals.	3,968	0	7				
Cash recoveries	10	6	3				
Fines and miscellaneous	615	4	11				
Total	69,759	4	9	Total	70,050	4	1

The above figures show that the actual expenditure during 1888-89 corresponded closely with the receipts of the fund during the year, the former having exceeded the latter by Rs. 290-15-4.

Map

67. In accordance with the directions of the Government of India, a map* has been prefixed to this report, with the object of showing the general distribution of the labour force over the several

* On the present occasion the map has only been inserted in the copies of the report furnished to Her Majesty's Secretary of State and to the Government of India. All copies of the report, however, contain a skeleton map of the Province.

districts of the Province where imported labour is employed, the routes adopted by immigrants and the location of depôts, landing-places not being depôts, and ports of inspection. The Chief Commissioner would, however, point out that, so far as it indicates the distribution of the labour force over the several districts of the Province, the map is not of much value, and may be misleading, unless it is borne in mind that in the case of some districts (*e.g.*, Sylhet) the gardens on which the labourers are employed are not evenly distributed throughout the district, or even throughout the greater portion of it, but are confined to certain particular localities or portions of the district.

By order of the Chief Commissioner of Assam,

F. C. DAUKES,

Dated the 15th July 1889. *Offg. Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam.*

Return showing the Statistics of Labour Force of

1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
			Additions made during the year 1888.												
			Imported.			Otherwise than by importation.									
Classes of labourers.		Number remaining at the end of year.	By contractors.	By garden-sardars.	Free labourers and dependents imported direct.	Number giving contract under Section 111.	Number giving contract under Section 112.	Received from other gardens.	Recovered after having been struck off as deserters.	Remaining after expiry of contract.	Otherwise obtained.	Births	By transfer to adults from minors.	Total added.	Total of columns 2 and 14.
Cachar	Act-I. labourers (adults)	16,566	684	1,331	....	2,762	108	77	50	....	....	....	....	5,512	16,078
	Non-Act labourers.. Adults ..	38,386	....	....	2,281	....	..	296	..	3,970	4,304	....	958	11,904	50,290
	Non-Act labourers.. Children..	39,570	....	....	963	....	..	45	..	330	666	3,030	....	5,034	44,604
	Total	93,522	684	1,331	3,244	2,762	108	418	50	4,300	4,970	3,030	958	22,450	110,972
Sylhet	Act-I. labourers (adults)	8,981	74	910	....	3,388	69	86	16	....	....	....	....	4,543	13,524
	Non-Act labourers .. Adults ..	30,525	....	....	5,588	....	..	1,262	..	3,036	2,278	....	608	12,779	43,297
	Non-Act labourers .. Children..	21,440	....	....	3,023	....	..	445	..	....	693	2,169	....	6,330	27,770
	Total	60,946 *	74	910	8,611	3,388	69	1,793	16	3,036	2,971	2,169	608	23,545	84,591
Surma Valley	Act-I. labourers (adults)	19,547	758	2,741	....	6,150	177	162	66	....	....	....	....	10,055	29,602
	Non-Act labourers .. Adults ..	68,911	....	....	7,069	....	..	1,58[illegible]	..	7,006	6,582	....	1,561	24,676	93,587
	Non-Act labourers .. Children..	61,010	....	....	3,986	....	..	490	..	330	1,359	5,199	....	11,364	72,374
	Total	149,468	758	2,741	11,055	6,150	177	2,211	66	7,336	7,941	5,199	1,561	46,095	195,563
Kámrúp	Act-I. labourers (adults)	481	....	154	....	29	18	....	9	....	....	....	....	210	661
	Non-Act labourers .. Adults ..	1,417	....	....	16	....	..	56	..	96	273	....	19	460	1,877
	Non-Act labourers .. Children.	862	....	....	107	....	..	22	..	....	121	122	....	372	1,234
	Total	2,760	....	154	123	29	18	78	9	96	394	122	19	1,042	3,802
Darrang	Act-I. labourers (adults).....	19,080	1,916	2,213	...	2,569	86	407	54	....	....	....	....	7,245	19,325
	Non-Act labourers.. Adults ..	10,954	....	....	469	....	..	85	..	2,100	5,409	....	183	8,196	19,150
	Non-Act labourers.. Children..	8,760	....	....	1,608	....	..	50	..	..	659	724	....	2,941	11,701
	Total....	31,794	1,916	2,213	2,077	2,569	86	542	54	2,100	5,068	724	183	18,382	50,176
Nowgong	Act-I. labourers (adults)	1,817	756	238	....	97	..	34	6	....	....	....	....	1,131	2,948
	Non-Act labourers.. Adults ..	6,202†	....	....	488	....	..	119	..	830	1,512	....	116	3,065	9,267
	Non-Act labourers.. Children...	4,231	....	....	475	....	..	74	..	....	169	319	....	1,037	5,268
	Total....	12,250	756	238	963	97	..	227	6	830	1,681	319	116	5,233	17,483
Sibságar	Act-I. labourers (adults)	28,745	3,282	3,530	....	7,605	150	616	123	....	....	....	....	15,306	44,053
	Non-Act labourers.. Adults ..	17,959	....	....	568	....	..	277	..	5,394	4,331	....	433	11,003	28,962
	Non-Act labourers.. Children...	26,841	....	....	3,504	....	..	198	..	....	859	2,265	....	6,826	33,667
	Total....	73,545	3,282	3,530	4,072	7,605	150	1,091	126	5,394	5,190	2,265	433	33,137	106,682
Lakhimpur ..	Act-I. labourers (adults)	19,061	3,453	3,560	....	1,759	127	347	136	....	....	....	....	9,382	28,443
	Non-Act labourers.. Adults ..	17,112	....	....	1,206	....	..	255	..	2,929	2,119	....	354	6,863	23,975
	Non-Act labourers.. Children...	18,109	....	....	3,296	....	..	126	..	....	339	1,498	....	5,259	23,368
	Total....	54,283	3,453	3,560	4,502	1,759	127	728	136	2,929	2,458	1,498	354	21,504	75,787
Brahmaputra Valley.	Act-I. labourers (adults)	62,154	9,407	9,695	..	12,059	381	1,404	330	....	....	....	....	33,276	95,430
	Non-Act labourers.. Adults ..	55,645	....	....	2,747	....	..	792	..	11,349	13,644	....	1,055	29,587	85,232
	Non-Act labourers.. Children...	58,833	....	....	8,990	....	..	470	..	....	2,047	4,928	....	16,435	75,268
	Total....	174,632	9,407	9,695	11,737	12,059	381	2,666	330	11,349	15,691	4,928	1,055	79,298	253,930
Total for the Province.	Act-I. labourers (adults).....	81,701	10,165	12,436	....	18,209	558	1,567	396	....	....	....	....	43,331	125,032
	Non-Act labourers.. Adults ..	122,836	....	....	10,716	....	..	2,350	..	18,345	20,226	....	2,616	54,263	176,819
	Non-Act labourers.. Children...	119,843	....	....	12,976	....	..	960	..	330	3,406	10,127	....	27,799	147,642
	Total....	324,100	10,165	12,436	23,692	18,209	558	4,877	396	18,685	23,632	10,127	2,616	125,393	449,493

* The difference of 286 labourers between this entry and that shown in column 30 of the statement at the end of the report for 1887 is due to inclusion this year of the Commissioner. The differences in the three classes,—Act adults, non-Act adults, and children,—are due to some extent also to re-classification, as one manager had

† The difference of 108 labourers between this entry and that in column 30 of the statement at the end of the report for 1887 is due to the omission of this number from

the Tea-gardens in the Province of Assam during the year 1888.

17	18		19		20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33		34
Deductions made during the year 1888.																		Annual strength		
		Deaths.		Desertions.																
Transferred to other gardens	Left the garden with permission.	First half year.	Second half-year.	First half-year.	Second half year.	By transfer from minors to adults.	Number giving agreements under Section 111.	Number giving agreements under Section 112.	Cancelment under Sections 111, 140, or 177.	Cancelment for permanent unfitness under Section 122.	Cancelled under Section 139.	Suspended under Section 139.	Effux of time, Section 141.	Redemption, Section 142.	Number dissolved by mutual consent.	Total deducted.	Number remaining at the end of the year 1888.	Strength on 1st July 1888.	First half year.	Second half year.	Death-rate per mille.
77	....	275	298	341	395	....	....	....	19	20	10	..	3,649	2	30	5,206	10,872	10,975	10,770	10,923	61·9
296	4,548	742	500	1,158	683	....	1,261	24	....	....	..	..	....	..	..	9,007	41,283	40,611	39,498	40,947	30·9
45	1,003	362	520	146	209	953	7	....	....	....	..	..	....	..	..	3,325	41,279	40,860	40,126	41,079	21·8
418	5,441	2,369	1,416	1,640	1,277	953	1,268	24	19	20	10	..	3,649	2	30	17,538	93,434	92,466	90,494	92,950	30·3
159	...	254	262	407	287	....	....	....	1	19	..	..	3,325	..	12	4,726	8,798	8,989	8,960	8,868	57·8
315	3,299	503	559	1,257	1,372	..	1,211	6	....	....	..	..	...	..	..	8,422	34,875	35,047	33,786	34,961	31·2
107	904	366	372	388	280	608	6	....	....	....	..	..	....	..	..	3,191	24,579	23,587	22,513	24,083	31·6
581	4,263	1,123	1,193	2,052	1,939	608	1,217	6	1	19	..	..	3,325	..	12	16,339	68,252	67,578	64,259	67,912	34·9
236	....	529	660	748	672	....	....	....	20	39	10	..	6,974	2	42	9,932	19,670	19,914	19,730	19,792	50·1
611	7,647	1,245	1,059	2,410	1,955	....	2,472	30	....	....	.	..	....	..	..	17,429	76,158	75,658	72,284	75,908	31·7
152	2,057	718	892	534	589	1,561	13	....	....	....	..	..	....	..	..	6,516	65,858	64,467	62,738	65,162	25·0
999	9,704	2,492	2,611	3,692	3,216	1,561	2,485	30	20	39	10	..	6,974	2	42	33,877	161,686	160,039	154,753	160,862	32·3
6	....	24	18	6	5	....	....	....	....	....	..	..	123	..	..	182	479	504	477	491	86·9
25	468	22	23	11	7	....	13	14	....	....	..	..	....	..	..	583	1,294	1,345	1,331	1,319	32·2
6	169	26	14	1	4	19	....	....	....	....	..	..	....	..	..	239	1,025	1,022	957	1,023	40·7
37	637	72	55	18	16	19	13	14	....	....	..	..	123	..	..	1,004	2,798	2,871	2,815	2,834	44·9
407	...	389	491	264	216	....	....	....	4	66	..	..	2,851	1	32	4,791	14,404	14,657	13,868	14,630	62·5
85	5,062	102	145	136	285	....	1,407	35	....	....	..	..	....	..	..	7,257	11,883	12,633	11,793	12,263	20·4
50	665	227	190	30	85	153	....	....	....	....	..	..	....	..	..	1,360	10,321	9,990	9,375	10,155	42·9
542	5,727	718	826	430	586	153	1,407	35	4	66	..	..	2,851	1	32	13,358	36,618	37,280	34,637	37,049	43·1
25	....	67	48	24	48	....	....	....	....	26	..	..	448	11	14	721	2,227	1,978	1,897	2,102	58·1
64	1,933	103	93	276	114	....	65	....	....	....	..	..	....	..	..	2,648	6,619	7,394	6,798	7,006	28·3
46	291	111	1.1	47	2	116	....	....	....	....	..	..	....	..	..	732	4,536	4,467	4,247	4,501	47·9
145	2,224	281	242	347	181	116	65	....	....	26	..	..	448	11	14	4,101	13,382	13,839	13,044	13,610	39·2
645	....	808	908	493	421	....	....	....	....	91	..	..	10,431	6	20	13,828	30,225	30,612	29,678	30,418	57·0
280	4,665	344	339	351	327	....	2,648	52	....	....	..	..	....	..	..	9,006	19,956	21,396	19,677	20,676	33·7
223	1,632	627	643	109	113	433	....	....	....	....	..	..	....	..	..	3,780	29,887	28,860	27,850	29,373	44·3
1,148	6,297	1,779	1,890	958	861	433	2,648	52	....	91	..	..	10,431	6	20	26,614	80,068	80,868	77,206	80,468	46·5
347	....	726	826	390	514	....	....	....	2	178	..	..	4,047	16	222	7,268	21,175	21,822	20,291	21,348	74·2
139	3,4	251	2·2	352	346	....	1,095	68	....	....	..	..	....	..	..	6,008	17,968	18,648	17,980	18,408	28·2
222	1,171	416	390	97	299	354	....	....	....	....	..	..	....	..	..	2,949	20,419	20,269	19,189	20,344	40·7
728	4,736	1,393	1,498	819	1,159	354	1,095	68	2	178	..	..	4,047	16	222	16,225	59,562	60,639	57,461	60,100	49·1
1,440	....	2,014	2,291	1,182	1,204	....	....	....	6	361	..	..	17,900	34	288	26,720	68,710	69,273	65,718	69,991	63·8
613	15,693	822	882	1,106	1,079	....	5,138	169	....	....	..	..	....	..	..	25,502	57,730	61,616	57,630	59,673	28·9
547	3,928	1,407	1,348	284	521	1,055	....	....	....	....	..	..	....	..	..	9,080	66,188	64,608	61,720	65,398	43·2
2,600	19,621	4,243	4,511	2,572	2,804	1,055	5,138	169	6	361	..	..	17,900	34	288	61,302	192,628	195,497	185,064	194,062	46·1
1,676	...	2,548	2,951	1,930	1,876	....	....	....	26	400	10	..	24,374	36	330	36,652	68,380	69,187	83,444	88,782	62·9
1,224	23,340	2,967	1,941	3,516	3,034	....	7,610	199	....	....	..	..	....	..	..	42,931	133,888	137,274	129,815	135,581	30·2
699	5,985	2,135	2,230	618	1,110	2,616	13	....	....	....	..	..	....	..	..	15,596	132,046	129,075	124,459	130,560	84·0
3,599	29,325	6,735	7,122	6,764	6,020	2,616	7,623	199	26	400	10	..	24,374	36	330	95,179	354,314	355,536	339,818	354,925	39·8

statistics of one garden, which were not included in the statement for 1887, as the returns were sent in by the manager long after the report for 1887 was submitted by the Deputy-
erroneously included some non-Act labourers among the Act labourers in 1887.
the present returns, as it has been found that one manager had in 1887 shown this number twice over through an oversight.

districts of the Province where imported labour is employed, the routes adopted by immigrants and the location of depôts, landing-places not being depôts, and ports of inspection. The Chief Commissioner would, however, point out that, so far as it indicates the distribution of the labour force over the several districts of the Province, the map is not of much value, and may be misleading, unless it is borne in mind that in the case of some districts (*e.g.*, Sylhet) the gardens on which the labourers are employed are not evenly distributed throughout the district, or even throughout the greater portion of it, but are confined to certain particular localities or portions of the district.

By order of the Chief Commissioner of Assam,

F. C. DAUKES,

Dated the 15th July 1889.

Offg. Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam.

Return showing the Statistics of Labour Force of

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
		Additions made during the year 1888.												
		Imported.			Otherwise than by importation.									
Classes of labourers.	Number remaining at the end of year.	By contractors.	By garden-sardars.	Free labourers and dependents imported direct.	Number giving contract under Section 111.	Number giving contract under Section 112.	Received from other gardens.	Recovered after having been struck off as deserters.	Remaining after expiry of contract.	Otherwise obtained.	Births.	By transfer to adults from minors.	Total added.	Total of columns 2 and 14.
Cachar ..... Act-I. labourers (adults)	10,566	684	1,831	....	2,762	108	77	50	....	....	....	....	5,512	16,078
Non-Act labourers.. Adults ..	36,366	....	....	2,381	....	..	296	..	2,970	4,304	....	953	11,904	[illegible]
Non-Act labourers.. Children .	39,570	....	....	963	....	..	45	..	330	666	3,030	....	5,034	44,604
Total	86,522	684	1,831	3,344	2,762	108	418	50	4,300	4,970	3,030	953	22,450	110,972
Sylhet ..... Act-I. labourers (adults)	8,981	74	910	....	3,388	69	86	16	....	....	....	....	4,543	13,524
Non-Act labourers.. Adults ..	30,525	....	....	5,588	....	..	1,262	..	3,036	2,278	....	608	12,772	43,297
Non-Act labourers.. Children..	21,440	....	....	3,023	....	..	415	..	....	693	2,169	....	6,330	27,770
Total	60,946 *	74	910	8,611	3,388	69	1,763	16	3,036	2,971	2,169	608	23,645	84,591
Surma Valley Act-I. labourers (adults)	19,547	758	2,741	....	6,150	177	161	66	....	....	....	....	10,055	29,602
Non Act labourers.. Adults ..	68,911	....	....	7,969	....	..	1,558	..	7,006	6,882	....	1,561	24,676	93,587
Non Act labourers.. Children..	61,010	....	....	3,986	....	..	490	..	330	1,359	5,199	....	11,364	72,374
Total	149,468	758	2,741	11,955	6,150	177	2,211	66	7,336	7,941	5,199	1,561	46,095	195,563
Kámrúp .... Act-I. labourers (adults)	451	....	154	....	29	18	....	9	....	....	....	....	210	661
Non-Act labourers.. Adults .	1,417	....	....	16	....	..	56	..	96	272	....	19	460	1,877
Non-Act labourers.. Children ..	892	....	....	107	....	..	22	..	....	121	122	....	372	1,264
Total	2,760	....	154	123	29	18	78	9	96	394	122	19	1,042	3,802
Darrang .... Act I. labourers (adults).....	12,080	1,916	2,213	...	2,569	86	407	54	....	....	....	....	7,245	19,325
Non-Act labourers.. Adults ..	10,954	....	....	469	....	..	85	..	2,100	5,409	..	188	8,196	19,150
Non-Act labourers.. Children..	8,760	....	....	1,608	....	..	50	..	..	559	724	....	2,941	11,701
Total....	31,794	1,916	2,213	2,077	2,569	86	542	54	2,100	5,968	721	133	18,382	50,176
Nowgong .... Act-I. labourers (adults)	1,817	756	288	....	97	..	34	6	....	...	....	....	1,131	2,948
Non-Act labourers.. Adults .	6,202†	....	....	488	....	..	119	..	830	1,512	....	116	3,065	9,267
Non-Act labourers.. Children.	4,231	....	....	475	....	..	74	..	....	169	319	....	1,037	5,268
Total....	12,250	756	288	963	97	.	227	6	830	1,681	319	116	5,233	17,483
Sibságar .... Act-I. labourers (adults)	28,745	3,282	3,530	.. .	7,605	150	616	125	....	....	....	....	15,308	44,053
Non Act labourers.. Adults ..	17,959	....	....	568	. ..	..	277	..	5,394	4,331	....	433	11,003	28,962
Non Act labourers.. Children...	26,841	....	....	3,504	....	..	198	..	....	859	2,265	....	6,826	33,667
Total....	73,545	3,282	3,530	4,072	7,605	150	1,091	125	5,394	5,190	2,265	433	33,137	106,682
Lakhimpur .. Act-I. labourers (adults)	19,061	3,453	3,560	....	1,759	127	347	136	....	....	....	....	9,382	28,443
Non-Act labourers.. Adults	17,113	....	....	1,206	. ..	..	255	.	2,929	2,119	....	354	6,863	23,976
Non-Act labourers.. Children...	18,109	....	....	3,296	....	..	126	..	....	339	1,498	....	5,259	23,368
Total....	54,283	3,453	3,560	4,502	1,759	127	728	136	2,929	2,458	1,498	354	21,502	75,787
Brahmaputra Valley. Act I. labourers (adults)	62,154	9,407	9,695	....	12,059	381	1,404	330	....	....	....	....	33,276	95,430
Non-Act labourers.. Adults ..	53,845	....	....	2,747	....	..	792	..	11,349	13,644	....	1,055	29,587	83,232
Non-Act labourers.. Children...	58,633	....	....	8,990	....	..	470	..	....	2,047	4,928	....	16,435	75,268
Total....	174,632	9,407	9,695	11,737	12,059	381	2,666	330	11,349	15,691	4,928	1,055	79,298	253,930
Total for the Province. Act-I. labourers (adults).....	81,701	10,163	12,436	....	18,209	558	1,567	396	....	....	....	....	43,331	125,032
Non-Act labourers.. Adults ..	122,556	....	....	10,716	....	..	2,350	..	18,385	20,226	....	2,616	54,293	176,849
Non-Act labourers.. Children...	119,843	....	....	12,956	...	..	960	..	330	3,406	10,127	....	27,789	147,642
Total....	324,100	10,163	12,436	23,672	18,209	558	4,877	396	18,685	23,632	10,127	2,616	125,393	449,493

* The difference of 288 labourers between this entry and that shown in column 30 of the statement at the end of the report for 1887 is due to inclusion this year of the Commissioner. The differences in the three classes,—Act adults, non-Act adults, and children, are due to some extent also to re-classification, as one manager had

† The difference of 108 labourers between this entry and that in column 30 of the statement at the end of the report for 1887 is due to the omission of this number from

the Tea-gardens in the Province of Assam during the year 1888.

15	17	18		19		20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33		34
Deductions made during the year 1888.																			Annual strength		
Transferred to other gardens.	Left the garden with permission.	Deaths. First half-year.	Deaths. Second half-year.	Desertions. First half-year	Desertions. Second half year.	By transfer from minors to adults.	Number giving agreements under Section 111.	Number giving agreements under Section 112.	Cancelment under Sections 111, 140, or 177.	Cancelment for permanent unfitness under Section 132.	Cancelled under Section 129.	Suspended under Section 130.	Effluxion of time, Section 141.	Redemption, Section 142.	Number dissolved by mutual consent.	Total deducted.	Number remaining at the end of the year 1888.	Strength on 1st July 1888.	First half year	Second half year.	Death rate per mille.
77	...	275	396	341	285	....	....	....	19	20	10	..	3,649	2	30	5,206	10,872	10,976	10,770	10,923	61·9
296	4,248	742	500	1,153	683	....	1,261	24	....	....	..	..	....	..	..	9,007	41,288	40,611	39,198	40,947	30·2
45	1,093	352	520	146	209	953	7	....	....	....	..	..	....	..	..	3,325	41,279	40,880	40,225	41,079	21·3
418	5,441	1,369	1,416	1,640	1,277	953	1,268	24	19	20	10	..	3,649	2	30	17,538	93,434	92,468	90,494	92,950	30·3
159	..	254	262	407	287	....	....	....	1	19	..	..	3,326	..	12	4,726	8,798	8,920	8,960	8,868	57·8
315	3,229	503	559	1,257	1,372	....	1,211	6	..	....	..	..	....	..	..	8,422	34,875	35,047	32,786	34,961	31·2
107	964	366	372	388	380	608	6	....	....	....	..	..	....	..	..	3,191	24,579	23,587	22,513	24,088	31·6
581	4,203	1,123	1,193	2,052	1,939	608	1,217	6	1	19	..	..	3,326	..	12	16,339	68,252	67,573	64,259	67,912	34·9
235	...	529	660	748	672	....	....	....	20	39	10	..	6,974	2	42	9,932	19,670	18,914	19,730	19,792	60·1
611	7,647	1,248	1,059	2,410	1,955	....	2,472	30	....	....	..	..	....	..	.	17,429	76,158	75,658	72,284	75,908	31·1
152	2,057	718	892	584	589	1,561	13	....	....	....	..	..	....	..	..	6,516	65,858	64,467	62,738	65,162	25·0
999	9,704	2,492	2,611	3,692	2,216	1,561	2,485	30	20	39	10	..	6,974	2	42	33,877	161,686	160,039	154,758	160,862	32·3
6	....	24	18	6	5	....	....	....	....	....	..	..	123	..	..	182	478	504	477	491	86·9
25	468	22	23	11	7	....	13	14	....	....	..	..	....	..	..	583	1,294	1,345	1,281	1,319	23·3
6	169	26	14	1	4	19	....	....	....	....	..	..	....	..	..	239	1,025	1,022	907	1,023	40·7
37	637	72	55	18	16	19	13	14	....	....	..	..	123	..	.	1,004	2,798	2,871	2,815	2,834	44·9
407	..	389	491	264	216	...	....	....	4	66	..	..	2,851	1	32	4,721	14,404	14,657	13,268	14,530	62·5
85	5,062	102	145	136	285		1,407	35	....	....	..	..	....	..	..	7,257	11,893	12,633	11,793	12,263	20·4
50	665	227	190	30	85	133	....	....	....	....	..	..	....	..	..	1,380	10,321	9,990	9,375	10,155	42·9
542	5,727	718	826	430	586	133	1,407	35	4	66	..	..	2,851	1	32	13,358	36,618	37,280	34,537	37,049	43·1
25	....	67	48	24	48	....	...	.. .	....	26	..	..	448	11	14	721	2,227	1,978	1,807	2,102	68·1
64	1,773	103	93	276	114	....	65	...	....	....	..	..	....	..	..	2,648	6,619	7,394	6,794	7,006	28·3
46	201	111	1.1	47	2	116	....	....	....	....	..	..	....	..	..	732	4,536	4,107	4,340	4,501	47·9
145	2,224	281	242	347	182	116	65	....	....	26	..	..	448	11	14	4,101	13,382	13,839	13,044	13,610	36·2
645	....	808	1,008	495	421	....	....	....	....	91	..	..	10,431	6	20	13,828	30,325	30,612	29,078	30,418	57·0
280	4,665	344	339	361	327		2,648	52	....	....	..	..	....	.	.	9,006	19,056	21,396	19,677	20,676	33·7
223	1,632	627	643	109	113	433	....	....	....	....	..	..	....	..	..	3,780	29,887	28,860	27,850	29,373	28·3
1,148	6,297	1,779	1,890	958	861	433	2,648	52	....	91	..	..	10,431	6	20	26,614	80,068	80,868	77,206	80,468	46·5
347	. ..	726	826	290	514	....	....	....	2	178	..	..	4,047	16	222	7,268	21,175	21,522	20,291	21,348	74·3
159	3,565	251	242	332	346	....	1,005	68	....	....	..	..	....	..	..	6,008	17,968	18,848	17,980	18,408	29·2
222	1,171	416	390	97	299	354	....	....	....	....	..	..	....	..	..	2,949	20,419	20,260	19,189	20,144	40·7
728	4,736	1,393	1,458	819	1,159	354	1,005	68	2	178	..	..	4,047	16	222	16,225	59,562	60,630	57,461	60,100	49·[illegible]
1,440	. ..	2,014	2,491	1,182	1,204	....	....	...	6	361	..	..	17,900	34	288	26,720	68,710	69,278	65,713	68,991	63·9
613	15,694	892	892	1,196	1,079	...	5,138	169	....	....	..	..	....	..	..	25,502	57,780	61,616	57,690	59,673	28·9
527	3,928	1,407	1,328	284	521	1,055	....	....	....	....	..	..	....	..	..	9,080	66,128	64,608	61,720	65,398	43·2
2,600	19,621	4,243	4,511	2,572	2,804	1,055	5,138	169	6	361	..	..	17,900	34	288	61,302	192,628	195,497	185,064	194,062	46·1
1,676	...	2,543	2,951	1,930	1,876	....	....	....	26	400	10	..	24,874	36	330	36,682	88,380	89,187	83,444	88,783	62·9
1,224	21,340	2,067	1,941	3,516	3,084	...	7,610	199	....	....	..	..	....	..	..	42,931	132,898	137,274	129,915	135,581	30·2
699	5,985	2,125	2,230	818	1,110	2,616	13	.....	....	.....	..	..	....	..	..	15,596	132,046	129,075	121,453	130,560	34·9
3,599	29,325	6,735	7,122	6,264	6,020	2,616	7,623	199	26	400	10	..	24,874	36	330	95,179	354,314	355,536	330,812	354,925	39·8

statistics of one garden which were not included in the statement for 1887, as the returns were sent in by the manager long after the report for 1887 was submitted by the Deputy-
erroneously included some non-Act labourers among the Act labourers in 1887
the present returns, as it has been found that one manager had in 1887 shown this number twice over through an oversight.